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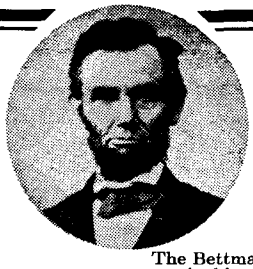

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Notes on Contributors

"Henderson the Rain King" is a chapter from SAUL BELLOW'S forthcoming novel of this title. The book is to be published later in the year by The Viking Press.

ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS, Hudson Review Fellow in Criticism for 1956-57, describes his article in this issue as the "first fruits of the Fellowship."

REED WHITTEMORE'S most recent book of poems is called *An American Takes a Walk.*

KENNETH BURKE will be teaching a course entitled "Studies In Poetic Terminology" at Indiana University this summer.

RENÉ CHAR is the distinguished French poet, a selection of whose work in translation, *Hypnos Waking*, was published in this country last year by Random House.

DAVID PAUL is an Irish poet whose translations from the French have appeared in various magazines.

PATRICK CRUTTWELL is a lecturer at the University of Exeter, and is the author of *The Shakespearean Moment* (Columbia University Press).

A. R. AMMONS is at work on a second book of poems, to be called *Hymns and Other Poems.*

HARRY MATHEWS lives in Paris. This is his first publication in a national magazine.

SIDNEY MONAS teaches history at Smith College.

VERNON YOUNG, recipient of the Hudson Review Fellowship in Criticism for 1957-58, is currently traveling in Scandinavia.

A novel by GEORGE P. ELLIOTT, *Parktilden Village*, will be published by Beacon Press this spring.

C. ROLAND WAGNER teaches philosophy at the University of Delaware.

IRVING SINGER, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the University of Michigan, is now on leave of absence and a Visiting Lecturer at The Johns Hopkins University.

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SAUL BELLOW

Henderson the Rain King

WHAT MADE ME TAKE this trip to Africa? There is no quick explanation. By the mercy of nature the thing happened as though in a dream; otherwise I might not have had the strength to bear it, and I am no weakling. The world which I thought so mighty an oppressor removed its wrath from me but not until it had reached a higher point than ever, and beyond a certain altitude *the thing was like a dream.*

I inherited about three million dollars after taxes, but I thought myself a bum, and I had my reasons. I behaved like a bum. Privately, I often looked into books to see whether I could find the right words, and one day I read, "The forgiveness of sin is perpetual, and righteousness first is not required." That impressed me deeply and I went around saying it to myself. But then I forgot which book it was. It was one of thousands left by my father who had also written a number of them. As he had used dollar bills for bookmarks, I often went through his library; it yielded quite a lot of money. Evidently I was too tight to mark the place and I lost my chance to learn how you could be forgiven.

But if I am to make sense to you people, I must give a short sketch of my condition before I went to Africa. It is complicated and I do it unwillingly. A complicated life is a bad life; everyone knows that. As soon as I begin to think what I had accomplished by the age of fifty-two there begins a disorderly rush—my parents, my wives, my teachers, my children, my girls, my farm, my animals, my habits, my money, my music lessons, my drunkenness, my prejudices, my brutality, my teeth, my face, my soul. "Curse you all. Back! Back!" I wanted to say to them. "And let me alone." But I suppose that if I were good and just and sane they would all be very different.

I am a graduate of an Ivy League university—I see no reason to embarrass my alma mater by naming her. Six feet two inches tall. Two hundred and sixty pounds. An enormous head, rugged, with hair like persian lamb's fur. Suspicious eyes, usually narrowed. Blustering ways. A great nose. I was one of three children, and

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the only survivor. For fifteen years I was married to a woman of my own social class. She was (and so far as I know she still is) handsome, tall, elegant, sinewy, golden-haired, private, fertile, quiet, with a large forehead and a high-bridged nose. None of her family can quarrel with me if I add that she is a schizophrenic, for she certainly is that. I, too, am considered crazy, and with good reason—moody, rough, tyrannical and probably mad. Frances and I had four children. One died in infancy. My daughter Violet lives with her mother in Switzerland, since Frances became a follower of Jung after we were divorced. My daughter Ricey until lately attended a boarding school in New Hampshire. My son Edward goes between California and New York. By my second marriage I have twin boys, now three years old. Ricey is very sweet but not quite right, and my son Ed troubles me greatly.

In my own way, I worked very hard. Violent suffering is labor, and often I was drunk before lunch. Soon after I came back from the War (I was too old for combat duty but nothing could keep me from it; I pulled strings until I was allowed to join the fight) Frances and I were divorced. And now she's up there in Switzerland. I wish her well.

I was delighted with the divorce. It offered me a new start in life; I had a second wife already picked out and we were soon married. My wife is called Lily (maiden name, Simmons).

Now I feel the disorderly rush—I led Lily a terrible life, worse than Frances. Frances was protected by her remoteness, but Lily caught it. I raved at her in public and swore at her in private. I got into brawls in the country saloons near my farm, and had to be bailed out. I had a fist fight with the vet over one of my pigs, and another with the driver of a snowplow on U. S. 7. And about two and a half years ago I fell from my tractor while drunk and ran over myself, breaking a leg. For months I was on crutches, hitting everyone who crossed my path, man or beast, and giving Lily hell. With the bulk of a football player and the color of a gypsy, swearing and crying out and showing my teeth and shaking my head—no wonder people hurried out of my way. If I had been good, a man of my size and passion, how pleased everybody would have been. Me too.

But Lily is, for instance, entertaining ladies and I come in with my filthy plaster cast, on stockinged feet; I am wearing a red velvet dressing gown which I bought at Sulka's in Paris in a mood

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of celebration when Frances said she wanted a divorce. In addition I have on a red wool hunting cap. And I wipe my nose and moustache on my fingers and then shake hands with the guests saying, "I'm Mr. Henderson, how do you do." And I shake hands with Lily, too, as if she were a stranger like the rest. I imagine the ladies are saying, "*He doesn't know her. In his mind he's still married to the first. How awful.*" Such unconscious fidelity thrills them.

But they are all wrong. As Lily knows, it was done on purpose. When we're alone she cries out to me, "What are you trying to do? What are you trying to do?"

However, I heard her saying on the telephone when I was brought home in the cast, "It was only another one of his accidents. He has them all the time. He's unkillable." Now maybe she said this only to be merry. Lily is a large, lively woman. Her face is sweet, and her character roughly corresponds. We have had good times, too. Some of the best and the most friendly were those of her pregnancy when it was advanced. Before we went to sleep I would rub her belly with baby-oil. Her nipples had turned from pink to glowing brown and the twin children moved in her belly and changed its round shape. I rubbed lightly lest my big thick fingers do them the slightest harm. And then before I put out the light I wiped my hands on my hair and kissed Lily, and in the scent of the baby oil we went to sleep.

But later we were at war again, and when I overheard her saying I was unkillable I put an antagonistic interpretation on it, though I knew better. No, I treated her like a stranger before the guests because I didn't like to see her behave like the lady of the house. I, the sole heir of a famous name and estate, am a bum, and she is not a lady but merely my wife. Merely my wife.

As the winters seemed to make me worse, she decided that we should go to a resort on the Gulf where I could do some fishing. We had had a bad Xmas, as you will hear. We went South, therefore, and stayed at a stylish hotel. A thoughtful friend had given each of the little twins a slingshot made of plywood, and one of these slingshots I found in my suitcase as I was unpacking and I took to shooting with it. I gave up fishing and sat on the beach shooting stones at bottles. So people might say, "Do you see that big fellow with the enormous face and the nose and the moustache? Well, his great-grandfather was a Secretary of State, his great-

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uncles were ambassadors to England and France, and his father was the famous scholar and historian, Willard Henderson, a friend of William James and Henry Adams." Didn't they say this? I was at a resort with my sweet-faced, anxious second wife and her twin boys. I was putting bourbon in my morning coffee and smashing bottles on the beach. The guests complained about broken glass and reported me to the management. The manager took it up with Lily; me he wasn't willing to confront. An elegant establishment; they accept no Jews, and then they get me. The other kids wouldn't play with our twins; the wives avoided Lily. After her own manner she tried to reason with me. She is intelligent but given to moralizing. Then she started to cry, and when I saw tears I lost my head and yelled "I'm going to blow my brains out. I'm shooting myself. I didn't forget to pack my pistol. I've got it on me now."

"Oh, Gene," she cried, "Oh, Gene!" She covered up her face and ran away.

I'll tell you why.

II

Because her father had committed suicide in that same way.

One of the bonds between Lily and me is that both of us suffer with our teeth. She is twenty years my junior but we both wear bridges. Mine are at the sides, hers are in the front. She has lost the four upper incisors. It happened while she was still in high school, out playing golf with her father, whom she adored. The poor old guy was a lush, and far too drunk to be loose on a golf course. Without looking or giving warning he teed off and the back swing struck Lily. It always kills me to imagine that cursed hot July golf course, and this drunk from the plumbing supply business, and this child of fifteen bleeding from the blow. Damn these weak drunks; damn these unsteady men; Lily wept for him as soon as for herself; she could never stand to hear a single word against him.

When we met, Lily's father had already been dead for ten or twelve years. Soon after his death she had married a man from the South, but they were soon divorced and she was living with her mother again. It happened that Frances and I went to a party

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in Danbury one winter night and Frances, who was in the midst of a long letter to Prof. Jung, forgot that I was there and drove home without me to finish it. Lily offered me a ride, and I said, "Okay." We went out to her car. It was a sparkling night of deep snow, and she was parked on top of a hill about three hundred yards long and smooth as iron. As soon as we left the curb the car went into a long skid and she lost her head and screamed "Eugene!" She threw her arms about me. There was no other soul on that hill or on the shovelled walks or for that matter in the entire region. The car turned completely around. Her bare arms came out of the short fur sleeves and held my head while her large eyes watched through the windshield, silent, and the car went down over the ice and hoar frost, white snow, first to the black trees on the right and then to those on the left. We slid into a snowdrift, and I took the wheel from her.

"How did you know my name?" I said, and she said, "Why everyone knows you are Eugene Henderson."

After we had talked some more she said to me, "You ought to divorce your wife."

I said to her, "What are you talking about? I'm old enough to be your father."

We didn't meet again until the summer. This time she was shopping and was wearing a hat and a white piqué dress, with white sandals. It looked like rain, and she asked me for a lift. I had been buying some lumber for the barn, and the station wagon was loaded with it. Lily started to direct me to her house and lost the way in her nervousness; she was very beautiful and wildly nervous. It was sultry; it began to rain; she told me to turn right and that brought us to a quarry filled with water—a dead end street. She began to cry out, "Oh, turn around, please! quick! I can't remember the streets and I have to get home." Finally we got there, a small house filled with the odor of closed rooms in hot weather just as a storm is beginning.

"My mother is playing bridge," said Lily. "I have to phone her and tell her not to come home. There is a phone in my bedroom." So we went up. There was nothing loose or promiscuous about Lily, I assure you. When she took off her clothes she began to cry out, "I love you. I love you!" And I said to myself as we embraced, "Oh, how can she love you—you—you!" There was a huge burst of rain on the trees, streets, roofs, screens, and thunder

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as well, but a warm odor, like fresh baking, arose from her as we lay in her sheets which were darkened by the warm darkness of the storm on a sultry afternoon in July. From start to finish she had not stopped saying, "I love you!" Thus we lay quietly, and the early hours of evening began.

Her mother was waiting in the living-room. I didn't care too much for that. Lily had phoned her and said, "Don't come home for a while," and therefore her mother had immediately left the bridge party to hurry back through one of the worst summer storms in many years. No, I didn't like it. Not that the old lady scared me, but I read the signs. Lily had made sure she would be found out. And now her mother, like a china doll won at a carnival, with a pretty china face sat enumerating the counts against Lily. "In my own house. With a married man." And so forth. Indifferent, I sat in the living room, unshaved, my lumber in the station wagon outside. Lily's odor must have been noticeable about me. And Lily, extremely beautiful, came down the stairs to show her mama what she had accomplished. Between them I sensed the important presence of Simmons, the plumbing supply wholesaler who had comitted suicide. In fact, he had killed himself in the bedroom adjoining Lily's. Lily at that time blamed her mother for her father's death. And what was I, an instrument of Lily's anger? "Oh no pal," I said to myself. "This is not for you. Be no party to this."

The mother had decided to behave well. It looked as though she were going to be big about it. Perhaps it was natural. Anyhow, she was highly ladylike towards me, but there came a moment when she couldn't check herself, and she said, "I have met your son."

"I think he's a year or two older than Lily," I said.

Presently I left, saying to Lily, "You're a fine looking big girl, but you oughtn't to have done that to your mother."

The stout old lady was sitting there on the chesterfield with her hands clasped and her knees wide apart and her eyes one continuous line under her brows from tears or vexation. So we didn't part friends.

Nevertheless, we soon met again, but in New York City, for Lily had left her mother, quitted Danbury and had a cold-water flat on Hudson Street where the drunks hid from the cold on the staircases. I came, a great weight, a huge shadow on those

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stairs, with my face full of country color and booze, and yellow pigskin gloves on my hands, and a ceaseless voice in my heart that said, "*I want, I want, I want, Oh, I want—Yes, go on,*" I said to myself, "*strike, strike, strike, strike!*" and I kept going on the staircase in my thick padded coat, in pigskin gloves and pigskin shoes, a pigskin wallet in my pocket, seething with lust and seething with trouble, and realizing how my own glances glittered up to the top of the stairs where Lily was waiting. Her face was round and full, her eyes were clear and narrow.

"Why are you living in this place?" I said.

She was a friend of all the old slum people and the mothers. I believe she thought that she did them good, showing these immigrants and Italians how nice an American could be.

"Are you going to waste the rest of your life?" she said to me. With Frances the case was hopeless. Only once, after I came back from the Army, did anything of a personal nature take place between us, and after that she was like Shelley's Moon again, wandering companionless. So I let her be, more or less. Except that one morning, in the kitchen, we had a conversation that set us apart for good and all. Just a few words. They went like this:

"And what would you like to do now?"

(I was then losing interest in farming.)

"I wonder," I said, "if it is too late for me to become a doctor?"

And like the wicked creature from an old story she laughed at me. She opened her mouth, usually so sober, not to say straight and dismal, and as she laughed I saw nothing but her dark gums. Not even her teeth, and this was very strange as she certainly had teeth, white ones. What happened to them?

"Okay, okay, okay!" I said.

Thus I realized that Lily was perfectly right. Nevertheless, the rest did not follow.

"I need to have a child. I can't wait much longer," said Lily. "For us it's either live together or die separately."

A year or two went by, and she failed to convince me. I didn't believe the thing was so simple. So she suddenly married a man from New Jersey, a fellow named Hazard, a broker. I took my wife and two daughters and went to France for a year. Several years of my boyhood were spent there, in and around the town of Albi where my father was busy with his studies. Fifty years ago I used to taunt a kid across the way, "*François—oh François!*

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Ta soeur est constipée." My mother used to write her poems in the brick cathedral. She had a favorite joke about an affected lady in a narrow doorway there. The lady said "*Voulez vous que je passasse?*" And she answered, "*Passassasez, Madame.*" She often laughed to herself and whispered, "*Passassasez.*" Gone, those times. A closed, sealed book.

We didn't stay in Albi, but went to Paris. I rented an apartment from a Russian Prince. His family are mentioned by De Vogüe as ministers under Alexander II. A tall, gentle creature, he was suffering under a Spanish mother-in-law, Senora Guirlandes, who rode him continually. He lived in the *chambre de bonne*, in the attic. About two million bucks, I have. I suppose I could have helped him. But my heart at this time was consumed with this demand I have mentioned—*I want! I want!* Poor prince, upstairs! His children were sick, and he said to me that if Senora Guirlandes didn't do something for him he would throw himself out of the window.

I said, "Don't be nuts, Prince."

Guiltily, I lived in his apartment, slept in his bed, and bathed in his bath twice a day. Instead of helping, those two hot baths only aggravated my melancholy. After Frances laughed at my dream of a medical career I never discussed another thing with her. Around and around the city of Paris I walked, every day. From Montmartre to the Gobelins factory, and from the Gare de l'Est to St. Cloud I went on foot. The only person who considered what my life was like was Lily, now Lily Hazard. At the American Express, I received a note from her written on her wedding announcement. I was bursting with trouble, and as there are a lot of whores who cruise that neighborhood, near the Madeleine, I looked some of them over, but this terrible repetition within—"*I want! I want!*"—was not stopped by any face I saw. I saw quite some faces.

"Lily may arrive," I thought. And she did. She cruised the city in a taxi looking for me and caught up with me near the Metro Vavin. Big and shining, she cried out to me from the cab. She opened the antique door and tried to stand on the running-board. Yes, she was beautiful—a good face, a clear, pure face, a gifted face, heated, instantaneous. Her upper lip trembled with joy. But stirred as she was she remembered her teeth. What

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did I care then about any porcelain teeth! Blessed be God for the mercies he continually sends me!

"Lily! How are you, kid! Where did you come from?"

I was terribly pleased. She thought I was a big slob, but of substantial value, and that I should live, not die, and that something good would come of me. She loved me.

"What have you done with your husband?" I said.

Riding back to her hotel, she told me, "I thought I should have children. I was getting old." (Lily was then 27.) "But on the way to the wedding I saw it was a mistake. I tried to get out of the car at a stop light, in my wedding dress, but he caught me. He punched me in the eye," she said, "and it was a good thing I had the veil because I had a black eye and cried all the way through the ceremony."

"What! He gave you a shiner?" I said, furious. "If I ever come across this Hazard I'll break him in pieces."

I kissed her on the eyes, and then we arrived at her hotel on the Quai de Voltaire and we were on top of the world, in each other's arms. A happy week followed; we went everywhere, and Hazard's private detective followed us. Therefore, I rented a car and we began a tour of the cathedral towns. And Lily in her marvelous way—always marvelously—began to make me suffer. "You think you can live without me, but you can't," she said, "anymore than I can live without you. The sadness just drowns me. Why do you think I left Hazard? Because of the sadness. When he kissed me I felt all alone. It was better when he punched me in the eye. There was some truth in that."

And I began to drink, harder than ever, and was drunk in every one of the great cathedrals—Amiens, Chartres, Vézelay, and so on. She often had to do the driving. The car was a little one (a *Deux Cent Deux décapotable* or convertible), and the two of us, of grand size, towered out of the seats, fair and dark, beautiful and drunk, the hand of salvation and the brand that would not be plucked from the fire. Thus we travelled from the Belgian border to the Massif, and if you loved France that would have been fine, but I didn't love it. From start to finish Lily had just this one topic, moralizing, one can't live for this but has to live for that, not evil but good, not death but life. Lily does not speak clearly; I guess she was taught in boarding school that a lady speaks softly,

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and consequently she mumbles, and I am hard of hearing on the right side, and the wind and the tires and the little engine also joined their noise. All the same, from the joyous excitement of her great blond face I knew she was still at it. With lighted face and joyous eyes she persecuted me. I learned that she had negligent and even dirty habits. She forgot to wash her underthings until, drunk as I was, I ordered her to. This may have been because she was such a moralist, in her way a philosopher. "The pigs on my farm are cleaner than you," I once told her. This led to a debate. The earth itself is dung, corruption. Yes, but it transforms itself, and a single person does not. Love is a transformer, she said. I yelled at her, "Shut up!" It didn't make her angry. She was sorry for me.

The tour continued, and I was a double captive, one of the religion and beauty of the churches which I was too drunk to see, and two of Lily, and her glowing and her mumbling and her embraces. She said a hundred times if she said it once, "Come back to the States with me. I've come to take you back."

"No," I said finally. "If there was any heart in you at all you wouldn't torture me. Damn you, don't forget I'm a Purple Heart veteran. I've had my bellyful of troubles."

"All the more reason why you should live now," she said.

Finally I told her, at Chartres, "If you don't quit it I'm going to blow my brains out."

This was cruel of me, as I knew what her father had done. Drunk as I was, I could hardly bear the cruelty of saying it. The old man had shot himself in the bedroom after a quarrel with both Lily and her mother. He was a charming man, weak, heartbroken, affectionate, and sentimental. He came home full of whiskey and sang old-time songs in the kitchen to Lily and the cook; he told jokes and tap-danced and did corny vaudeville routines, joking with a catch in his throat—a dirty thing to do to your child. Lily told me all about it until the old man became so actual to me that I loved and detested the old bastard myself. "Here, you clog-dancer, you heartbreaker, you pitiful joker—you cornball! What do you mean by doing this to your daughter and leaving her on my hands?" I said. And when I threatened suicide in the Chartres Cathedral, in the very face of this holy beauty, Lily caught her breath. The light in her face turned fine as pearl. She silently forgave me.

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"It's all the same to me whether you forgive me or not," I told her.

We broke up at Vézelay. From the first our visit there was a strange one. The *décapotable Deux Cent Deux* had a flat when we awoke the first morning. I accused the hotel of being responsible. It being fine June weather, I had refused to put the car in the garage, and in my opinion they had let out the air. I changed the tire quickly, using no jack, but in my anger heaving up the little car and pushing a rock under the axle. After I had had a fight with the hotel manager, my mood was better, and we walked around the cathedral, bought a kilo of strawberries in a paper funnel and went out on the ramparts to lie in the sun. Yellow dust was dropping from the lime-trees, and wild roses grew on the trunks of the apple trees. Pale red, gorged red, fiery, aching, harsh as anger, sweet as drugs. She took off her blouse to get the sun on her shoulders. Presently she took off her slip, too, and after a time her brassiere, and she lay in my lap. Annoyed I said to her, "How do you know what I want?" And then, more gently, because of the roses on all the tree trunks, piercing and twining and flaming, I said, "Can't you just enjoy this beautiful churchyard?"

"It isn't a churchyard, it's an orchard," she said.

I said, "Your period just began yesterday. What do you want?"

She said I had never objected before, and that was true. "But I do object now," I said, and we began to quarrel and quarreled so violently that I told her she was going back to Paris alone, on the next train.

She was silent. I had her, I thought. But no, it only seemed to prove how much I loved her. Her crazy face darkened with the intensity of love and joy.

"You'll never kill me, I'm too rugged," I cried at her, and then I began to weep from all the unbearable complications in my heart. I cried and sobbed.

"Get in there, you mad bitch!" I said, weeping. And I rolled back the roof of the *décapotable*. It has rods which come out, and then you reef back the canvas.

Under her breath, pale with terror but consumed also with glory, she mumbled as I sobbed at the wheel about pride and strength and soul and love, and all of that.

I told her, "Curse you! you're nuts!"

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"Without you, maybe," she said. "But when we're together I *know*!"

"Hell, you know. How come *I* don't know anything! Stay the hell away from me. You tear me to pieces."

Still sobbing, I turned around in the station, which was about twenty miles from Vézelay, and I headed for the south of France. I drove to a place on the Vermilion Coast called Banyuls. There I had a strange experience in the aquarium. It was twilight. I looked in at an octopus. It seemed to look at me and pressed its strange head to the glass, flat, the soft flesh becoming pale and granular—blanched, speckled. The eyes spoke to me coldly. But even more speaking, even more cold was the soft head with its speckles and the Brownian motion in those speckles, a cosmic coldness in which I felt that I was dying. The tentacles throbbed and motioned through the glass, and I thought, "This is my last day. Death speaks to me."

So much for the cruelty of my suicide threat.

III

But now what made me go to Africa?

When I came back from the War it was with the decision to become a pig farmer. This illustrates what I thought of life in general. After that bloody murder at Monte Cassino where so many Texans were wiped out, and afterwards my outfit also took an abominable shellacking, there were only Nickie Goldstein and myself left out of the original bunch, and this was odd because we were the two largest of them all and offered the best targets. Later I was wounded, too. But Goldstein and I were talking and when I asked him what he would do when the War ended, he said "Why me and my brother are going to have a mink ranch in the Catskills, if we'll live and be well." And I said, or my demon said, "I'm going to start breeding pigs." I had never seriously considered pigs, and after these words had issued I knew that if Goldstein had not been a Jew I might have said cattle and not pigs. But now it was too late to retract. And I took all the handsome old farm buildings, the carriage barns with panelled stalls, the fine old barn with the pergola on top and filled them

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with pigs, a pig kingdom, with pig houses on the lawn, and the place stank of swill and pigs. Furious, my neighbors got the health officer after me. I dared him to take me to the law. By my then wife, Frances, not a word was said except, "Please keep them off the drive." "You'd better not hurt one of them," I told her. "Those animals have become a part of me." And to the health officer, a certain Dr. Bullock who should have been called Dr. Sheep I said, "All those slackers and civilians and 4-Fs have put you up to this. Let them give back to nature all the pork that they have eaten in their time. I'll teach these twerps how reality smells."

Have you seen, coming in from New Jersey to New York, the gabled pens and runways, looking like models of German villages from the Black Forest? Have you smelled them (before the train enters the tunnel to pass under the Hudson)? These are pig-fattening stations. Lean and bony after their trip from Iowa and Nebraska, the swine are fed here. Anyway, I was a pig man. And as the prophet Daniel warned the despot Nebuchadnezzar, *They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.* Sows eat their young because they need the phosphorus. Goiter, however, attacks them as it does women. Oh, I made a considerable study of these clever doomed animals. The discovery that they were so intelligent gave me a kind of trauma. I thought the Abolitionist in me was awakened. (I am related in some tangled, root-system way to Harriet Beecher Stowe.) But if I had not lied to Frances and those animals had actually become a part of me then it was curious that I lost interest in them.

But I see I haven't got any closer to giving my reasons for going to Africa, and I'd better begin somewhere else.

Was it because of my father? He was a very famous man. He had only one eye, and he. . .

No, not that.

Well, then, here: My ancestors stole land from the Indians. They got more from the government and cheated other settlers too, so I became heir to a great estate.

No, that won't do either. What has that got to do with it?

Still an explanation is necessary. For living proof of something of the highest importance has been presented to me and I have to communicate it. Not the least of the difficulties is that the thing happened as in a dream. Some see the truth from the height

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of clear-eyed consciousness, while for others it is enclosed in a dream, and how shall I pierce the sides of this dream, thick as a vault?

Well, then, it was about eight years after the war ended. I was divorced from Frances and married to Lily, and I felt that something had to be done. I went to Africa with a friend of mine, Charlie Albert. He, too, is a millionaire. This turned out to be the chief bond between us, and it was not enough for me. His purpose was to make movies, and also to shoot big game with a bow and arrow. I didn't think much of this, but the moment was the psychological one for me and I decided to go along. This was also a honeymoon for Charlie. He too had remarried. I attended the wedding, I was asked to stand up but forgot to kiss the bride, and there was coolness on her part as a result, so that eventually she became my enemy. The expedition was modern in every respect—three jeeps, a portable generator, shower and a refrigerator. It was too luxurious for me. From the beginning I was critical of it.

We flew from Idlewild to Cairo, and from Cairo into the Somalis. Like floating white seeds we are borne in the air, sitting above the clouds at a height of three miles. As I had dreamed up at the clouds while a boy, so now I dreamed down on them. "Having seen the clouds from both sides," I thought, "a man can accept his death very easily." However, we made safe landings every time.

But after three weeks of travel in the bush, discontent increasing as I couldn't see in Charlie and his bow and arrows and his generator and his bride the smallest bearing upon my reason for coming to Africa, we parted company. I told him, "Charlie, this is too much luxury for me." Stolid, he observed me through his sun glasses, and the flesh about his mouth became very lumpy as he deliberated.

"Okay, Gene, shove off then," he said.

He believed I was jealous of his happiness with the young bride. I had spoiled her wedding day by omitting to kiss her. I said to him, "It does me no good to travel this soft way."

"That's your own lookout. Shove off, if you want," he said.

And that was what I did.

I have always had a soldierly rather than a civilian temperament. When I was in the Army and caught the crabs I went to get some powder. But when I reported what I had, four medics grabbed

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me. Right at the crossroads, in the open, they stripped me naked, and they soaped me heavily and shaved every hair from my body, back and front, armpits, pubic hair, moustache, eyebrows, and all. This was right near the waterfront at Salerno. Trucks filled with troops were passing, and peasants and fishermen and numerous women were looking on. The GIs were cheering and laughing, the peasants laughed, the whole coast laughed, and even I was laughing as I tried to kill all four. They left me bald and shivering, prickling between the legs and under the arms, raging, laughing, and swearing revenge. These are things a man never forgets and afterwards truly values. That beautiful sky; and the mad itch; the razors whistling over my skin and pulling the hairs; and the Mediterranean which is the cradle of man; the towering softness of the air; the sinking softness of the water, where Ulysses got lost, where he too was naked as the sirens sang.

In passing—the crabs found refuge in a crevice; I had dealings afterwards with these cunning animals.

But the War meant much to me, and I was wounded and got the Purple Heart. Believe me, I was grateful that my life was spared; the whole experience gave my heart a large and real emotion. Which I continually require.

Beside my cellar door last winter I was chopping pine logs for the fire—the tree-surgeon had left some limbs for me—a chunk of wood flew up from the ground and struck me in the nose. Owing to the coldness of the day, I didn't realize what had happened until I saw blood on my mackinaw. Lily cried, "You broke your nose." No, it wasn't broken but I carried a bruise there for some time. However, as I felt the blow my only thought was "Truth!"

Does truth come in blows? That's a military idea if there ever was one. Lily, too, had felt the force of the truth when her second husband Hazard punched her in the eye.

I was always a strong and healthy man, rude and aggressive; a bully in boyhood; in college I wore gold earrings to provoke fights. I had the name Frances tattooed in purple on my belly, under the ribs. I got an M. A. to please my father. Nevertheless, I have always behaved like an ignorant man.

Already forty-six years old when I got back from Italy, I mentioned to Frances that it would be good to study medicine. She

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laughed at me, because I was too old for that; she remembered that at eighteen I had been enthusiastic over Wilfrid Grenfell and afterwards over Albert Schweitzer.

What do you do with yourself if you have such a temperament? A student of the mind once explained to me that if you inflict your anger on inanimate objects you spare the living. This seemed to me to make good sense, and I tried it out. I tried with all my heart, chopping wood, lifting, ploughing, laying cement blocks, pouring concrete for the pigs. It didn't help much. Rude begets rude, and blows, blows. Not only begets, but increases. Wrath increases with wrath. So what do you do with yourself? Two and a half million bucks. After taxes, after alimony, and all expenses, I still have one hundred and ten thousand dollars in income, absolutely clear. A soldierly character like me! Usury and credit do this. Taxwise, even the pigs were profitable. But they were killed and they were eaten. They made ham and gloves and fertilizer. What did I make? Why, I made a sort of trophy I suppose. A man like me may be something like a trophy. Washed, clean, and dressed in expensive garments. Under the roof is insulation; on the windows thermopane; on the floors carpeting; and on the carpets, furniture, and on the furniture, covers, and on the cloth covers are plastic covers; and wall-paper; and drapes. All is swept and garnished. And who sits in the midst of this? Man! That's who it is, Man!

But there comes a day! There always comes a day of tears and madness.

Mine came, and I left for Africa. I think I'd better tell quickly what happened.

IV

It is a winter morning and I am fighting with my wife at the breakfast table about our tenants. She has remodelled a building on our property, one of the few I didn't take for the pigs because it was too old. I haven't allowed her to spend as much money as it needed, and so she hasn't done a very good job of it. Lily isn't what she thought she was, namely, the wife of a gentleman farmer. I am no gentleman; nor is she the wife she should have been. She made that place over with a new toilet and had it

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painted inside and out. But it had no insulation. Came November and the tenants began to feel cool. Well, they were bookish people; they didn't move about enough to keep their body heat up. Hell with them! I said when they complained. They belonged to a boarding school five miles down the road. My father had once been on the scholarship committee. Then Moustache Lardbutt, in charge of faculty housing, phoned and said they wanted to move. "Okay, let them," I said, and I wouldn't refund their deposit. I threw them off the property.

So the converted building was empty and the money put into it was lost. The tenants had left a cat behind. And I was sore and yelling at the breakfast table, hammering with my fist until the coffee pot turned over.

Then all at once Lily, badly scared, paused long and listened, and I listened with her. She said, "Have you seen Miss Lennox in the last fifteen minutes? She was supposed to bring the eggs?"

Miss Lennox was an old woman who lived aross the road and came in to fix our breakfast. A queer wacky little spinster, she wore a tam and her cheeks were red and mumpy. She would tickle around in the corners like a mouse and take home empty bottles and boxes and cartons and similar junk.

I went into the kitchen and saw this old creature lying dead on the floor. During my rage, her heart had stopped. The eggs were still boiling; they bumped the sides of the pot as eggs will do when the water is seething. I turned off the gas. Dead! Her small toothless face was growing cold. The soul, like a current of air, like a draught, like a bubble, sucked out of the window. I stared at her. *So this is the end?—farewell!* And all this while, these days and weeks, the wintry garden into which I looked now had been speaking to me of this fact and nothing else; and till this moment I had not understood what this gray and white and brown, the bark, the snow, the twigs had been telling me. I said nothing to Lily. Not knowing what else to do I wrote a note DO NOT DISTURB and pinned it to the old lady's skirt, and I went through the frozen winter garden and across the road to her cottage.

In her garden she had a tree of which the trunk and lower limbs were painted light blue. She had fixed little mirrors up there, and old bicycle lights which shone in the dark. In summer she liked to climb up in the branches with a can of beer and sit there

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with her cats. And now one of those cats was looking down at me. How could I be to blame? Because my voice was loud, and my anger so great?

In the cottage I had to climb from room to room over the trunks and baby-buggies and bushels and crates. The buggies went back to the last century, so that mine might have been there, too. Also bottles and lamps, old butter dishes and chandeliers were on the floor, shopping bags filled with strings and rags and bottle-tops and buttons—bushels full of buttons—door knobs. And on the walls calendars and pennants and samplers with mottoes.

And I thought, "Oh, shame, shame! Oh, crying shame! How can we? What are we doing? Why do we allow ourselves? The last little room of dirt is waiting. Without windows. For God's sake Henderson, make a move, put forth effort. You too will die of this pestilence. Death will annihilate you and nothing will be left. Nothing will have been, so nothing, but *nothing*, will remain. While something still *is—now!* for the sake of all, get out."

Lily wept over the poor old woman.

"Why did you leave such a note?" she said.

"Because nobody should touch her," I said, "except the coroner. I barely felt her. That's what the law is." I then offered Lily a drink, but she refused, and I filled a water-glass with bourbon and drank it. Its only effect was a heartburn. Whiskey could not coat the terrible fact. The old woman had died of my violence as people die of the heat in Brooklyn in July. Lily seemed aware of it, and it frightened her. Married to a man whose passion alone causes the frail and delicate to collapse; I don't blame her. And as the hearse backed into the drive—the undertaker has bought the house where the dancing-teacher used to live, where I used to go to class in my patent leather shoes—I refused to look.

"Lily," I said, "You know the trip that Charlie's going to take? I think I'll go along with him. Let's put the Buick in storage. You won't need two cars."

She made no objection, for once. "Maybe you should," she said.

"I've got to do something."

So Miss Lennox went to the cemetery, and I went to Idlewild and took the plane.

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ROBERT MARTIN ADAMS

Métilde: or a Lesson in Logic

Grazie a Paul Arbelet, tutti gli stendhaliani sono un po' innamorati di Métilde. (P. P. Trompeo, p. 129)

HAD SHE ONLY. . . . But the very notion of speculation is idle. She did not love him; and that, according to the pitiless logic of these affairs, was that.

She simply did not love him; yet she dominated his life, by his own scrupulous and poignant chronology, from March 4, 1818, till May 22, 1824—from the age of 35, that is, till 41. "THE GREATEST EVENT OF HIS LIFE" was his first meeting with her, the first pressure of her hand; and time, though it darkened the tones of his feeling, never faded them. With Mélanie, Alexandrine, and Menti, his mature judgment allowed Métilde to dispute the honor of having inspired the deepest attachment of his life. In listing three great despairs, he inevitably included her name:

Abandon of Gina 1817
impossible of Métilde 1820
abandon of Menti 1826
all by love.

And a cryptic note overpage seems to revive the sick and despairing anguish of that "dead-blank" to which she had reduced him:

. . . et sui eum non receperunt.
Mét. in 1.000 ans, 1819
La plus grande douleur.

The greatest sorrow was Métilde, in Milan, 1819. But she also did more than any of his other loves to develop his insights, shape his thinking, and form his character. Cold consolations at the time, these are inevitably the main concerns of the removed and unwrung student. And the fact is beyond question; it was under the influence of Métilde that the "Day of Genius" occurred, that day (it was December 29, 1819) when Henri Beyle discovered the first great principle of his art, that to make an experience live

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artistically, one must bury it psychologically. His first worthy book was *De L'Amour*, written about his passion for Métilde, and in a special Stendhalian sense, by her. In his own copy of it he one day inscribed a brief and eloquent note:

I^er^ mai 1825. Death of the author.

Time, which has dealt so kindly by the unhappy and bumbling Beyle, has been less considerate of Métilde. After a century and a quarter, little more remains of her than a slender, proud, and pathetic ghost. Of Beyle's letters to her only nine survive, and none of hers to him or to anyone else. No portrait of her has come to light; no descriptions mark out more than a casual trait or two. Even her now-famous admirer, though he prided himself on being one of the few men to remember her more than ten years after her death, does not report more than a couple of nondescript phrases of her speaking. Indeed, from official records and passing allusions winnowed out of piles of musty Milanese scandal, the skeleton of her life can be, as it were, archaeologized. She was born Mathilde Viscontini, of a respectable and comfortable Milanese parentage, in 1790. At 17 she was married to Jean Dembowski, a Pole by birth, an Italian citizen by naturalization, a soldier of fortune by trade, and currently in the service of the French armies. He was older than his bride by twenty years.

Though he may have profited by a historical confusion with his elder brother Louis-Mathieu, who was also a general in the French armies, there seems no reason to doubt that Jean Dembowski was a competent and energetic soldier. He served in various posts—diplomatic, logistic, and administrative, as well as strictly military—during campaigns in Spain and Italy; he gained promotions and positions of trust. This, for a soldier, is success. No doubt adjectives like "rapacious," "adventurous," and "crude" were applied to him on occasion, but by themselves they would mean little. Subject peoples cannot judge fairly of a foreign ruler, and soldiers of fortune are not supposed to model their characters on Amadis of Gaul. But the domestic discontents of General Dembowski confirm the public charges of an overbearing and heavy-handed disposition. As a husband, he is said to have combined an extravagant jealousy of his own wife with an extravagant interest in the wives of other men. There were rumors of browbeating, talk of physical threats. To a woman of spirit, this can only have been

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irritating; and in the summer of 1814, Mathilde Viscontini-Dembowska, after seven unhappy years of marriage, took her two sons, left her husband, and fled to Switzerland. In 1816 she returned to Milan, but only after receiving assurances from her husband that henceforth she might live alone if she chose. She never resumed married life.

Casual enough in settled times, Milan society might well have forgotten entirely the behavior of General Dembowski's wife during the rush and confusion of the Hundred Days. But an awkward coincidence amplified the scandal a hundred-fold. Also in Switzerland at the time, "a compatriot in exile," was Ugo Foscolo, the umbrageous, indiscriminate romantic poet—a man with a shock of bristling auburn hair, a set of bright red opinions, and an amorous temperament which was positively scarlet. To be sure, he was at Zurich and she at Berne, but there were visits. Popular rumor had attributed to this oddly-assorted couple a previous liaison, during the winter of 1809-10. Nothing, then, was easier than to represent Mathilde as having run off to Switzerland with her lover; nor could anything be more offensive to the good taste of those ladies who had managed to stay on easy terms with their own husbands and lovers in Milan.

In point of fact, nothing could be less likely than this scandal of an affair with Foscolo. *He* was perfectly capable of it, no doubt; nor does it much matter that he is known to have had another mistress in the period 1809-10, for in love he laid a heavy Mediterranean emphasis on quantity, not quality. But she . . . ! She, who found Beyle lacking in delicacy, to have thrown herself, in a breathing-spell between pregnancies, into the arms of a blusterer like Foscolo; to have been picked up and laid aside and picked up again by this thick-skinned egotist without a murmur of audible protest! She did not have the docility to endure such an abuse of sentiment; she did not have the sensuality to be carried away without any sentiment at all; she did not have either surface or motive to feign a docility which she did not feel. Whatever lay between her and Foscolo, it was certainly not love; and most likely it was nothing more than sincere friendship tempered by political sympathy.

She was doubly wronged, then, as Beyle first saw her; by her brute of a husband, and by the shallow, conventional cynics of Milan society. Her unhappiness was a first and welcome proof of

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her sensibility; in addition, she was beautiful and brave. Her beauty, though unmanifested by actual portraits, Stendhal has sufficiently marked out by comparing her to the "Herodiades" or "Salome" in the Uffizi Gallery, a painting long supposed to be the work of Leonardo but now known to be by Bernardo Luini. It is a dark and melancholy beauty, languorous and feminine to a degree; with downcast eyes and withdrawn expression, Salome turns away from the head which is held toward her by a bushy ruffian. She half-grasps, half fails to grasp, the basin which is to hold the head, itself more dreamy than gruesome, of the Baptist; her expression, between revulsion and indifference and fascination, is infinitely inward and mysterious. They are beautiful features, *after the heavy-lidded, voluptuous manner of Leonardo; but Beyle* the aspiring amorist might have been well advised to note an element of coldness and self-absorption in their melancholy expression.

As for the bravery of Mme. Dembowska, it was exercised at first passively, in solitude, poverty, and hauteur; Beyle was not bragging when he described his mistress, through a thin veil of fiction, as "la petite tête la plus altière de Milan." But later her defiance took a more active and audacious form. For what was it but pride, an arrogance at finding society unworthy of her, which brought Mme. Dembowska into the revolutionary conspiracy of carbonarism? Some of the biographers speak of her "prudery" toward Beyle as evidence of a desire to placate society; but placatory prudes do not ordinarily wind up on the carpet in police offices, charged with high treason. Mathilde would not stoop to adultery as a revenge on society; but her conspiratorial connections suggest that it was revenge she wanted, not acceptance. And what, more than this spectrum of qualities—pride, beauty, unhappiness, and a passion for liberty—could have made her a suitable object for the exercise of Henri Beyle's powers of crystallization?

He crystallized almost immediately. To describe in detail the campaign which ensued is neither necessary nor profitable. Beyle pursued his fair enemy, not after the cynical fashion of a Lovelace or a Valmont, nor even after the prudential manner which had led him to consider, in behalf of Banti, the advantages and disadvantages of having the duchess (Mme. Daru). He fell in love romantically, forever, to the last breath of his being—*à la* Werther,

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in a word. The first of his surviving letters to the lady ends with the following burning assurances:

> I know myself: I shall love you for the rest of my life, and nothing you may do will ever change the notion that has imprinted itself upon my soul—the notion I have conceived of the bliss of being loved by you—or the contempt it has given me for all other forms of happiness! In short, I need, I thirst to see you. I believe I would give all the rest of my life to converse with you for a quarter of an hour on the most indifferent matters.
>
> Farewell, I leave you in order to be more with you, to dare to speak to you with all the abandon, all the energy of the passion that devours me.
>
> Henri

Starting on this level, a poetic lover will not find it easy to elevate further the tone of his sentiments; and in fact the later tenor of Stendhal's feeling for Métilde was prevailingly somber, not to say morbid. On the 30th of September, at just 9:32 in the evening, he was visited by intimations of ultimate success; on the 5th of January, 1819, a friend spoke encouraging words to him. But these fitful gleams were soon shrouded in deepest gloom. No sooner did he dare hope a bit than he was sternly advised to despair. Before long, the only question remaining open for discussion was the precise amount of intimacy compatible with this fixed, continuing, unalterable despair.

The picture need not be drawn too black. Pursuit of Métilde had, as we shall see, its incongruous and comic moments; and while Beyle was pouring forth his griefs to his lady or his diary, he might perfectly well be, and often was, writing jovially to his Paris crony, Baron Adolphe de Mareste—condoling the Baron's latest case of the clap, reporting the latest scandals of Milan, or ruefully predicting new muddles in French politics. He took a merry tour to the Brianza with his friend the liberal Milanese lawyer Vismara. He did not play young Werther all the time; he frequently did not play it at all well; but one is surprised to find a man of his years and experience undertaking the role at all. Yet from the aspect of native temper, Beyle's part in the tragi-comedy is easier to understand than that of his inamorata. His impulse toward the

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melancholy, sensitive, sentimental mistress had been unexercised since the days of Mélanie Louason; but it was his natural, his deepest inclination. Alongside one of the most romantic and luxuriant of his letters to Métilde, he once wrote, "Voici le naturel *of this man*"—she had touched something ultimate and innate within him. In one limited sense only did she represent a major novelty; he had never actually loved a woman of aristocratic, "Spanish" sentiments. But since childhood he had known and admired this quality in Elizabeth Gagnon, his great-aunt. Contempt for all vulgarity, especially for money and business, combined with a wholehearted devotion to the ideals of heroic magnanimity and moral honor as one finds them expressed in *The Cid*—these were the ingredients of "Spanish" sentiments. If not natural to Beyle, they constituted a second nature; and they too found expression in his passion for Métilde. Thus, on the basis of two deep-laid predispositions one has almost accounted for the depth and duration of Beyle's passion.

But she? Her "cruelty," such as it was, needs no explanation; she did not love Signor Beyle, and quite properly declined to be talked into pretending that she did. Her "Spanish" disposition—her evident lack of curiosity, and, for all we can hazard, of a sense of humor—prevented her from taking him at a less exalted but more amusing level. But the "kindness" which she actually did show needs more consideration. As early as the first months of 1819 she had seen that he loved her to the point of folly, and decided that she could not possibly love him; why did she not break with him, once and for all, at that time? On any of a dozen occasions, it would have been easy enough simply to refuse further communication. But she never quite closed the door tight against him. She might, on the score of "delicacy," announce her refusal to listen to further pleadings; yet she must have listened a little, for she persisted in answering them, sometimes in fourteen-page letters. She might reduce his visits to one per fortnight, but she never put an end to them. Looking tenderly upon him (or was this merely his imagination?), she swore roundly that she could never love him. By way of rebuking Beyle, she sometimes showed partiality for other men; and this did terrible things to his self-esteem, but it also encouraged him to think that she was not inaccessible. As he himself said sadly, even if he were to discover her in bed with another man, he would make excuses for her. At different times he suspected coldness and coquetry on her part;

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perhaps also she was motivated by political caution. Conversations among ardent young carbonari went on in the little house on the Piazza Belgiojoso, and a universal mocker who had heard them might not be a safe man to offend and then cast adrift on the shadowy waters of Milan society. But these can only be conjectures; one might as well question the Salome of the Uffizi on her opinion of John Baptist as try to guess Métilde's full feelings about Beyle.

Whatever her motives then, and however much she complained that he was "difficile à désespérer," Métilde maintained the connection; and Stendhal, whose motives were all too patent, submitted to her decrees with a docility altogether characteristic of this most docile and endearing of roués. He repelled the advances of Nina Vigano in the almost superstitious belief that this would make him more worthy "in the eyes of God" to be loved by Métilde. He counselled his fatal charmer to seek happiness in love; in supreme humility he even advised her to find happiness by loving someone else. When he vowed to adore her for the rest of his life, he had clearly meant it as sincerely as a man who deeply appreciates the sex ever means this sort of declaration; and it is almost painful to see how disinterested he could be. Yet, between his own timidity and her severity, he made only one effort, and that a half-hearted one, to bring matters to a head.

This was the famous episode of Volterra, whither Mme. Dembowska had retired momentarily during the summer of 1819, to visit her two sons who were at school there. Walking about the grounds of the college, she observed but did not recognize a stumpy figure muffled in an overcoat and further obscured by a pair of green spectacles. Evening settled over the campus, and the mysterious figure, sensing that while an overcoat in June might be explained, dark glasses at night would certainly be too much, took them off, and stood revealed as Beyle. He was recognized at once by Mme. Dembowska, but out of deference to the conventions pretended not to know her. That night he wrote a first letter of explanation; and next morning, feeling calm and reflective, he went to a meadow from whose green shades he could look out, across the Tuscan plain, toward the consoling blue waters of the Ligurian sea. Did he know that this meadow was his mistress' favorite spot for a morning promenade? He protests that he did not. At any event, while languishing about here in amorous, melancholy revery,

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he was once more encountered by Mme. Dembowska. There followed a series of beseeching letters and angry answers, awkward scenes improvised for the benefit of the Rector, fits of jealous temper inflamed by her petulant partiality for a Signor Giorgi, and lengthy, explanatory interviews. She accused him of lacking delicacy, of trying to force himself upon her, of persecuting her; of everything, in fact, except the supreme crime in love (the only one he had actually committed), of making them both look ridiculous. Beyle at least was too civilized not to be conscious of this omission; perhaps this is one reason why *De L'Amour* makes such a point of contemning French wit, French satire, French regard for convention. All these qualities are stigmatized as an unworthy fear of being thought absurd, and bespeak a man well aware of just how absurd he had been. In fact, Beyle's spirit throughout the whole affair was not French, in the sense of "rational" and "moderate"; it was Spanish—sublime, that is, and ridiculous at the same moment.

Of course absurdity is inseparable from love *à la* Werther, and supremely irrelevant to it, as well. The man who takes love at the heroic pitch finds in passion a metaphor which he immolates himself trying to pronounce. Love is for him the key to religion, beauty, music, art, and all the wards and corridors of sympathy. As this hero occurs in fictions, a certain interest rises from the question whether he will find the proper rhetoric before he bursts; his real paradigm is Aesop's frog, who tried to puff himself up into an ox. But Beyle did nothing so silly with his passion for Métilde as to write it up in the rhetoric of Saint-Preux and Werther. He tried a romance, to be sure, with Métilde's cousin Mme. Traversi rigged for the role of ogress, and himself thinly disguised as a bold Polish cavalry officer who had served with Napoleon. But this was broken off abruptly and very properly, before it had endured beyond the first ten pages; for the characters had nowhere at all to go. Like Beyle in his love, they began at a *dead blank*.

A whole series of frustrations and agonizing inhibitions thus led up to the creation of Beyle's first book of genius, *De L'Amour*. *Rome, Naples, and Florence*, the *Lives of Haydn, Mozart, and Metastasio*, and the *History of Painting in Italy* are charming and enthusiastic volumes on topics which pleased him very much. They illustrate his sensitivity, at once naïve and theatrical, to certain sorts of artistic and social experiences. Yet they are as far from ex-

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pressing the whole man as they are from dealing adequately with their avowed subjects. On every topic except his own soul, Beyle was the most amateur of amateurs; this is at once the crowning glory of Stendhal and his major limitation. What gives value to the first books is the sensibility which reveals itself between the cribbed passages—in the sections written from personal observation, and, above all, in the digressions. But Beyle did not have the patience to be a historian, a biographer, or a critic; and though he could assume the mask of a man-of-the-world, it muffled expression of at least half the Stendhalian sensibility.

De L'Amour, a "scientific" treatise purporting to present the anatomy of a passion, actually comes closer than any of his previous writings to catching in print the full complex of Stendhal's character. To begin with, its pretence of being "scientific" imposes a strict restraint on rhetoric. As a matter of taste, Beyle always despised rhetoric, and fought shy of themes which seemed to invite it. Over and over again, in the journals and letters as well as in more formal works, we find him dismissing an ecstatic experience in a few dry words as something which description could only tarnish, something before which all words are inadequate, and so on. His passion for Métilde was as overwhelming as a physical constraint; years after he had left her forever, he happened to see in the street a little white satin hat like that which she used to wear, and, seeing it, grew faint and had to lean against the wall. While correcting proof on *De L'Amour*, in the summer of 1822, he found himself still so susceptible to the memory of Métilde that he wept over the galley-sheets; and though he was enjoying a social success in the salons of Paris, he spent many hours dreaming of that sublime and lonely creature in the Piazza Belgiojoso, halfway across Europe. Against this sort of inner compulsion it was essential to maintain strict discipline. Beyle's device of the learned treatise was useful in cropping rhetorical flowers; it served to create a fascinating and mysterious counterpoint of confession and ideology, where every axiom might be the casket of a memory, and every episode a foreshortened avenue of psychological insight. And for the first time it set in direct opposition or close conjunction Beyle's concise, cogent, and witty mind *vis à vis* the florid exfoliations of his romantic sensibility.

Even in the fully formed novels, Stendhal is always more a philosopher than a describer. He dashes at the physical details of

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a scene, but will hold up the most intense and blinding vision of dramatic conflict to scatter aphorisms on human conduct. *De L'Amour* employs the same pattern, but turns it inside out. Generalizations here are the apparent texture of the book, through which gleam the outlines of a narrative. These gleams are by no means elusive or obscure. A young Werther, recently dead in Volterra, by name Lisio Visconti (Métilde's maiden name, it will be recalled, was Viscontini) and another sad young man named Salviati, who has been reduced by his mistress to a single visit every fortnight, pop in and out of the book, providing by letter, journal, and anecdote, material to illustrate the fatal progress of passionate love. The words of Métilde are sometimes cited directly, though the magic syllables of her name are never pronounced; the philosopher argues with some energy that the proper age for a mature and seasoned woman to fall in love for the second time is just 28—Métilde's age in 1818, when Beyle first met her; there are even bitter though covert allusions to Mme. Traversi, who is supposed to have poisoned against love and happiness the mind of a noble and wretched young woman. If this, in Stendhal's judgment, was concealment and discretion, what must have been confession and self-revelation?

Yet we do him wrong to set these two qualities in opposition; the acts of concealing and revealing were, for Stendhal, almost identical. His puns and anagrams, pseudonyms, epithets, emblems, initials, and macaronics are all devices for saying more than most men feel it safe to say, and for concealing at the same time what has been said. His special liking for lurid dramatic chiaroscuro derives in a way from this gift for letting a ray of light fall into or rise out of the thick atmosphere of a pit. Here too *De L'Amour* works the device of the novels in reverse. As a work of ideology, the treatise on love is clear, sharp, dry, and limited; but there rise out of it and around it such clouds of sensibility, such obscurities of the soul, as make it an authentic expression of the whole man.

In effect, the art of Stendhal, like most of the things he had to say about love and even about himself, is summed up in the central image of *De L'Amour*. The concept of "crystallization," though it was not Stendhal's to begin with, and though he put it forward with diffidence, provides the key to his mind. In addition, I think it the most successful and suggestive of the many metaphors by which the 19th century tried to convey the complexity of

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creative art. Aeolian harps and fading coals, radiant lamps and sensitive plants, bubbling springs, deep wells, wild west winds, and open wounds—all these images yield insights into the quality of the creative mind. But the image of crystallization has so many facets and combines so many overtones, that one is hard put to dissect them all out. At a venture, one might begin by saying that the metaphor implies:

1. Formality of structure arrived at by organic growth,
2. Angularity leading to luminescence,
3. Solidity giving the impression of fragility,
4. Formation, in silence and darkness, by an inner law, of structures which glitter in the light,
5. Events trivial to consciousness given splendor by immersion in the subconscious,
6. Indistinguishable conjunction of actives and passives in the creative mind of lover or artist.

Above all, it suggests without pathos or ostentation the authority of the imagination and its limits. There is a pathetic-heroic notion deriving from Plato that beauty as it exists for the artist or lover is transcendental and immanent; there is a counter-position, which Hobbes, Hume, and Locke must share with Mephistopheles, according to which beauty is primarily in the eye of the beholder. It is an agreeable delusion, founded upon the passions, but subject to correction by the cool voice of common sense and the abstract ideas of general nature. Stendhal's image of crystallization implies an inclination to the latter position. When one crystallizes on an object, one imputes to it by association all the desirable qualities which one can bring within its range. But this is not lawless sentiment or wilful self-delusion; it is a way in which the mind can manifest itself to itself, a revelation of the fact that its essential nature includes a passionate as well as a coolly cognitive strain. The truth one discovers by crystallizing is a truth about the errors to which one's mind is subject; but it is a way of seeing clearly in the end—as Stendhal described it, of discovering the real by way of the imaginary and entering the world by way of heaven (*Filosofia Nova*, *I*, *16*). There could be no more incisive image for a book which proposes to treat analytically the most iridescent and delicate of passions.

The implosive development of his love for Métilde was once described by Stendhal as a "course in logic"; it is an odd expres-

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sion, but typical of the man, for whom logic was secret, passionate, and personal. The essence of his study was immersion in the mysterious currents of affinity. He never mentioned Métilde to his worldly Parisian friends, never named her in the book where her presence is implicit throughout, never in his lifetime printed a word by which she could be identified. He buried her far from the world of light and allowed logic to transform her—not the logic of the English tradition, but that which Condorcet, Cabanis, and Tracy derived from the great structure built by Descartes on the immovable fact of consciousness. *Penser c'est sentir* was the apparently inescapable corollary of *Je pense donc je suis;* and, however limited as a statement of total philosophy, or, for that matter, as a psychological conclusion, these phrases pointed an admirable direction for the man on whom literature had imposed its ulterior motives. By immersing the memory of Métilde in the strong waters of logic defined in terms of feeling, Beyle did nothing to desiccate or formalize his love; he allowed it to etch its own pattern, to grow by the laws of its own life, lit only faintly and indirectly by the glimmering light of formal categories and general experience. There is a paradox about the molecular particle whose course we can never see truly because it is disturbed by the light which enables us to see it. The course in logic which Stendhal administered to himself balanced on a paradox much like this. The heart had its reasons, which reason, adroitly defined and limited, could perfectly well understand, since reason itself was so largely an activity of the heart.

Of course, this happy little construct totters dangerously, the minute one looks twice at the word "understand." Soberly considered, the position is not far from agreeable flimflam; yet it invites an audacity useful to the novelist, while avoiding the awkward boxes of copperlined categories, and for these favors we must be grateful. Leaving endorsements aside, to understand Beyle's philosophical heritage is to obviate at least one major gambit about his discussion of love. There has been a great deal of facile irony concerning the form of *De L'Amour*, as if the author had undertaken to produce a textbook or an easy outline, complete with categorical conclusions. But he was interested in the living currents of passion, not its dead contours; interested in the forms which grow out of the whole compacted and concentrated mind, not in those which by exclusion and abstraction can be

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carved out of or imposed upon it. The stream of Stendhal's logic is really a constant exercise in sympathy, an effort to comprehend nothing less than little white satin hats and the Salome in the Uffizi. To chart the currents of the underground river, he threw himself into it.

That painting of Salome, though Stendhal sometimes used it in general terms to symbolize an ideal type of Lombard beauty, and sometimes declared that others of his loves or his literary creations resembled it, belongs peculiarly to Métilde. (It is much faded now, and if seen on any but the brightest days, produces a glum impression of anonymous yellow-brown; but the outlines and shading of the face are still lovely.) While I was looking at it recently, there occurred to me a series of impishly logical illogicalities, which, if they have any substantiality at all, may illustrate the special meaning of logic for Stendhal and illuminate one seemingly extravagant twist of his second best novel.

Mathilde de la Mole, who is the focus of Julien Sorel's second intrigue in *The Red and the Black*, is evidently intended to contrast in several different ways with Mme. de Renal, who occupies, with almost geometrical neatness, a commanding position in the first volume of the novel. Mme. de Renal loves Julien naturally, Mlle. de la Mole loves him, or must be made to love him, artificially and unnaturally. Mme. de Renal is a mother, and loves with a mother's warm, uncritical heart; Mathilde is a mistress who must be pursued, won, lost, recaptured, disputed—a tempting and perilous bit of quicksilver. Though Mathilde is to bear Julien's child, he thinks only of entrusting it to Mme. de Renal. Mathilde is lawless, arrogant, and even in her rare moments of self-abasement, selfish; Mme. de Renal is humble, innocent, and in conventional Christian terms, deeply moral. Religion is for her a fiery barrier, which adds to her love the last element of precious sacrifice. For Mathilde the nearest equivalent is her demonic pride of family and person. She is passionately proud, after the Spanish manner—contemptuous of money, birth, and the forms of society as only a person can be who commands all of them; indeed, she despises the whole modern world, and finds her ideal in the heroic 16th-century warrior-courtier-gentleman who is the central figure of Corneille's tragedy. Pride is so far the ruling passion of Mathilde that Julien can control her only by affecting an even icier counter-pride and indifference. Prompted by Prince Korasoff, a Beylean man-of-the-world and a

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master of the difficult art of high fatuity, he throws up a smoke screen of pompous epistolary love-making about Mme. La Maréchale de Fervaques, as a way of provoking Mathilde. The cure is drastic. Mathilde is overcome by his affected coldness and hypocrisy, and begs forgiveness for her abominable pride. Here now the parallel with Métilde (the divine Métilde of Milan and 1819) is complete; reflecting on the experience of that campaign in later years, Beyle was apt to think that a little well-placed disdain on his part might have been happily decisive. In the abortive "Romance of Métilde" Prince Korasoff's part is assigned to a certain Baron Zanca, who provides the unhappy Polosky with worldly advice, but the pattern is identical in outline. Evidently the story of Julien Sorel and Mathilde de la Mole is the story of poor Dominique and his divine Métilde as it might have been played out had the youthful ardor of Beyle been guided by the wise and worldly discretion of Prince Korasoff.[1] Métilde is cleverly disguised under her actual name of Mathilde; she is somewhat younger, and her two boys have been transposed into the family of Mme. de Renal. Julien Sorel stands in the dark outside her window, watching the curtains being drawn and the light being extinguished, as Henri Beyle waited in the dark Piazza Belgiojoso for a glimpse of Métilde. Like her Milanese original, Mathilde de la Mole is a secret radical; her ruling passion, like that of Mathilde Dembowska, is pride. Summarizing the difference between his hero's two mistresses, Stendhal in the course of the novel itself declares that Mme. de Renal represents "natural love," love of the heart; while Mathilde de la Mole represents "love of the head."

But these phrases take us back, by a kind of swirling, rotary reasoning, to connect the portrait in the Uffizi, which was the very emblem, in Beyle's mind, of Métilde, with one of Mlle. de la Mole's most perverse and fascinating traits—her passionate, not to say

[1]The woman usually cited as the model for Mathilde de la Mole is, I am aware, Alberthe de Rubempré—Mme. Azur. But, aside from proximity, what can be urged in her behalf? She did not understand or sympathize with Mathilde de la Mole; she thought Julien wicked; she did not act out of pride; did not hold herself above society; was not a secret radical; was not given, so far as we know, to Mathilde's cold and dreamy expression; and Beyle's opinion of her was contemptuous, despite his infatuation—he said she was *une catin*, not *sublime* like Angela Pietragrua, but *à la DuBarry*. This is not Mathilde de la Mole in any particular; and as for proximity (Alberthe was almost contemporaneous with the writing of *The Red and the Black*, while Métilde left Beyle's life a decade earlier), when one deals with the experience of crystallization, proximity in time is not an advantage but the contrary. There is no good pulling yesterday's branch out of the saltmines, it has gathered no crystals.

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morbid, interest in decapitation. Her ancestor had had the honor of having his head cut off, in retribution for loving a queen; she is enamored of the grandeur of this action, and of Julien when he shows himself capable of an equally distinguished destiny. The novel ends with her carrying away the head of Julien in her lap—an obscure and magnificent private ritual, which quite overshadows Mme. de Renal's conventional broken heart. Love of the head, with a vengeance! Yet a grotesque, an almost psychotic pun, such as this, is part of the "logic" which Stendhal learned from his course of study with Métilde. Perhaps it was an accident or a joke at first, but he used it as a sculptor working in wood uses a knot which he comes across accidentally. The train of association which carried him away intertwined pride, beauty, and contemplation with narcissism, cruelty, and a passionate desire to have the beloved's head "brought to one on a platter." Mathilde is in one sense a mechanical opposite to Mme. de Renal; applying Beyle's own superficial categories even more superficially than he ever consistently applied them, one might be inclined to say that Mme. de Renal represents passionate love and Mathilde vanity-love. But the course in logic did not lead to, it did not permit, any such stolid one-for-one identifications. Stendhal never says solemnly after the manner of so much modern fictioneering, "I shall make Julien Sorel a good square symbol of John Baptist and arrange round him various females representative of Herod's daughter and so on." His approach to overtones was enchantingly indirect; and one could illustrate profusely Freud's chapter on Dream-Work with examples of transposition, substitution, elision, compression, suppression, and sublimation, which set Stendhal's novels apart from the raw materials supplied by Beyle's life. Some of his finest touches are the omissions and passing glances, the open possibilities which give his novels their overpowering sense of chiaroscuro. So it was, then, with Mathilde. Her pride came from "la petite tête la plus altière de Milan;" that lofty head suggested the one by Luini, which mingled frigidity, loveliness, horror, and something completely inexplicable—an inward landscape, mysterious, evil, and enchanting, beyond anything which can be rendered in pigments; and this "love of the head" fused vanity and necrophilia in a kind of inspired and crazy metaphor, to produce one of the supreme women of modern fiction. This was logic, if you will; a logic of association as strict in its requirements

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and as delicate in its balances as the syllogistic tubing with which the logical positivist fastens together structures of pressure-proof, meaningless assertions. I claim for it no unequivocal allegiance, nor did Beyle. Yet it justifies itself by existing—in the novel, primarily, but thence by perfectly clear implication in those of us who find the novel dangerously full of meaning.

Danger, yes; though it is only a conventional expression. In a discussion based on discursive logic, the logic of feeling or any rival logic is "logic" only by courtesy and is dangerous by long-standing tradition. Yet, at the cheapest, we can defend Stendhal's book as an adventure in illogic. And, at a bolder stroke, we may kick the convention over any time we choose. Traditionally, discursive logic is safe; is, indeed, the only safe intellectual construct. But much of its safety has been discredited by Freud and more formal philosophers, along with its exclusiveness and above all its claim to suppress rival "logics." The logic of symbols, the logic of mythology, the logic of instinctive development, the logic of feeling, clearly have claims on us just as ancient as those of discursive logic, and perhaps more deeply rooted in our nature. "Beylism" was in effect a logic of this sort; not a complete and universal way of understanding the cosmos, naturally, but a series of linked, distinctive reactions rising from a self deliberately formed by controlled immersion in experience, self-observation, and self-analysis. Perhaps the appropriate word for the product is "syndrome" rather than "philosophy"; in any event, it served to keep the novelist in touch, remarkably in touch, with sides of our nature which it is not invariably convenient to forget. "Je est un autre" said Rimbaud, by way of expressing total alienation; but for Stendhal his ego was magnificently diffused through everything he experienced, everything he imagined, everything he thought. It was a first principle of his intellectual organization; it was a great part of what he had to organize. A single existence could not possibly suffice for all the realities Stendhal had to keep in touch with; he invented identities as a way of enveloping, surprising, and burrowing into the world; and his novels are often tissues of disguise and counter-disguise, of sensitive identity and protective identity-mask. There is a logic which he sets against the world, the logic of ideology, but it is a machine in the hands of that higher logic which is capable of developing the crystalline structures of Beylist feeling throughout the universe which Stendhal

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creates. The pure, aseptically pure, clarity of Stendhal's observation in matters of fact and feeling is famous; equally remarkable, though not so often remarked, is the perfect clarity and purity of his moral judgment—its indifference to those gross cutouts repeatedly indulged in by sentimental melodramatists like Flaubert and Henry James—cutouts like the Sincere Young Person and the Wicked Cynic. But most remarkable of all is the crystalline and mathematical purity with which Stendhal's images develop from the center out, implicating new facets of their own nature as they go. From the first, Mathilde de la Mole is surrounded by the imagery of a queen, a princess; from the first, a specially veiled and tenuous mystery surrounds the birth of Julien. He is a totally disconnected man, a dreamer who withdraws into the wilderness and takes his loftiest inspiration from the lonely flight of an eagle. All these and many other characteristics are scattered, apparently at random, through the early parts of the novel; out of them rises, gradually, and at first unclearly, the Salome-John Baptist mystery which at last establishes itself as the emotional center of the novel. Yet the central prism of feeling which joins Julien to Mathilde was formed, one presumes, before the novel was ever begun; when Beyle, thinking of himself and his treatment at the hands of the divine Métilde, scrawled in the margin of *Armance* John the Evangelist's phrase, which may just possibly be descriptive of the Baptist, "*et sui eum non receperunt.*"

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REED WHITTEMORE

The Self-Made Man

> "———is an early example of the self-made man, with an undeniable grandeur which is the product of his own manifest sense of having been responsible for his own being."
>
> —R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam*

I

At first he was merely sullen, gentlemen. Growing
Was, as his elders put it, gratis,
And if there were someone to thank, very well,
But not much. Later,
Making a pile in the market he put his old mother
To pasture and started to buy things—
Planes, wives, ranches—until he could look
For miles in any direction and see only
His, as it were, creations, and thus was led
Into philosophy, where he bred
A phoenix as mascot and climbed onto rostrums,
Saying,
"I am Alpha and so forth. I take the clay
Which is myself, and with my own hands
Mold me as I only, I me may, believe me."

His friends were terribly pleased; they had never
With deity mingled; so they
Crowded around him and asked him to teach them
How to themselves punch and prod.
Which he did.
And for six difficult days, like Swedish masseurs,
They molded themselves in his image, and told themselves gravely
To multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.
Which they did.
And on the seventh day, resting, they looked at each other,
And then looked at him and themselves, and were pleased, for lo!
All of them were like him and he was like
Them, and together they

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Cut a singular figure as they chanted,
"I am Alpha and so forth. I take the clay
Which is myself, and with my own hands
Mold me as I only, I me may, believe me."

And America prospered.
The corn grew, and the wheat, and all that, and God
(Who had been elsewhere)
Returned in due course and looked on the fields and factories
And rejoiced to think he would not in this instance wax wroth—
No flood—
And forthwith went down out of heaven and walked in that land,
Walked in its country lanes and city streets,
And was pleased,
Until he heard snickers behind him and, turning, beheld
A multitude tiptoeing after him snickering, whispering,
"Here is one we forgot. Don't he look funny?"

Then, gentlemen,
Then was he wroth? Look at me.
Look at me on this rostrum, note that no lightning
Channels my cheeks.
I speak to you lightly.
I say to you I am a poet, I take the Lord
Here as I need him and mold him to my
Creation, not his, and yet man and beast
Walk on this earth unharmed, and all creeping things
Creep as they crept before, and no whirlwind speaks to me.
And I say to you,
I am Alpha and so forth, and that which I am,
That which I mold from this clay,
Is all the whirlwind there is, or the lightning,
All that commandeth the morning, wingeth the peacock,
Draweth the whale from the deep, or maketh
The dust.
And I say to you,
Where in my chatter, where in my banter,
Where, where in this impious figure before you
Is God's wrath?

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II

To be like a god, to mold and to hold
Earth as one's private estate,
You must be up and about it
Early and late.

". . . was at the office at 7:10 every morning."

Start with convictions, be ready to talk
Far into the night
On firming the flesh and the spirit up,
As Polonius might.

"When I am stripped and manacled . . . it is necessary to preserve absolute serenity of spirit."

Will power, character, discipline, nerve—
These words and others like them
Lord let over your quatrains.
Frailties? Strike them.

Train, train next for action (with
Sweatshirts, weights, dark bread,
Steambaths and a notebook
By your bed)

" . . . he would practice going under water in his own bathtub."

For years, years, and then, primly,
Walking a common city street,
Bump some old god, catch him
In mid-air, and meet.

"Edison sent for him to be his personal secretary."

Now, having done your derring-do,
You're in.
Nothing remains for you but to
Begin.

III

In the beginning, gentlemen,
There was a road, icy,
And farmhouses all in a long, sparse line in the snow.
Through this scene I moved in a grey light
For a decade or two, farmhouses passing, fences,

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And then came to the main street of a town
Garish with Christmas, and paused for a moment
In front of a crude crêche, but heard no
Sound from bells, shoppers, passing cars, no
Sound but that of the sea—breakers, shells
Rolling in froth, wind in long grass;
And so I
Drove on, up a slight hill, and the town
Vanished, and
Vanished, and there, icy, as
In the beginning
Was a road,
And farmhouses all in a long, sparse line in the snow.

IV

He, being grateful, looks into your eyes,
Sees rough diamonds shining there, and buys.
You loosen up a bit, take off your sweatshirt,
Grow sociable and gracious, put your best foot
In the best doors, enter, stay,
Growing more celestial every day,
Till the old gods, seeing their own youth in you,
Declare you clever, charming and true blue.

"Go to sleep, my little one.
Soon you'll weigh at least a ton."

"Houdini had unobtrusively slipped off his shoes and socks and was untying and retying the knots with his toes."

And so you settle down, and block by block,
Or line by labored line, or stock by stock
Build your own new world, and with the vision
Of an old god make provision
For tacking on more world, in case you later
Gauge your greatness to be greater.
Nothing is too small, too large, but you it
Make or take or tackle, and subdue it
Till it's placid where you put it, knows its place
In your great chain of being, deuce or ace.

"When his power was firm in electricity he captured gas."

And having done (or started), you look down
On all your works, beam, chortle, don your crown,

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And tell yourself, or have your creatures tell you
What a fine earth yours is, and how well you
Raised this up and put that under,
Stuck to principles and shared your plunder.
For part and parcel of a god's design
Must be to prove to others he's divine.
A horn or two to blow, an ad to print
Will keep your realms intact, your mints aglint.
Such means for self-improvement cast a spell.
They mesmerize the world, and you as well,
Until the truth about you, that cruel rope
That tethers you to some mere Alpine slope,
Snaps and you shoot skyward like a prayer,
Propelled by your own prose, your own hot air.

"My next novel . . . I'm already getting gleams for it; I see it as the biggest thing I've tackled."

And this is as it should be. You at last
Can leave behind your wormy side, your past,
And having not yet met your future think
You are forever in the pink,
Free in spirit, free in lust, to breed a
Christ or Christmas daily with some Leda.

"*Now*, he said delightedly, *I can do anything I like.*"

V

The mind, gentlemen,
The mind makes music sometimes,
Not words. Images
Dance to this music, passing
Back and forth in a pattern, printing
The same delicate pattern over and over,
So that
A nameless man climbs a nameless hill and descends,
And climbs again and descends, and his motions are wordless,
And all of that landscape is wordless, fences, trees
Being not what they are but what, speechless, he points at
As he climbs and descends his hill and hears nothing, nothing,
And the sea moans in his ear, and the shells sing,
And the wind in the beach grass whirrs, making this music.

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VI

Mary Baker of New Hampshire,
Mary Baker of New Hampshire.
I speak it twice; the rhythm stamps her
Simple Mary of New Hampshire.

What shall I say of Mary? Shall I whine
That she, like Lycid, died before her prime?
(She lived to eighty-nine, then left behind
Three million dollars, and a million of her Mind).
Or shall I say that she, a shepherdess,
No more the wild Thyme and the Willow may caress?
(All the pastoral landscape that she chose
She tacked to parlor walls—old rose).

—No. Coleridge would be better.

Mary Baker of New Hampshire
Lived within her skin
For fifty years, then found her mind
And lived in it, in Lynn.

"It was decided between them that they should go to Lynn, then a town of some 30,000 souls, where Mrs. Glover felt that the large shoe factory population might offer good prospects."

Kennedy and others helped her
With the sick commune
Who made a pilgrimage to see her
In the house of Miss Magoun.

". . . an office in the house of a decorous lady named Miss Susie Magoun."

The name she went by then was Glover,
Or Patterson—take your pick—
For she had left two men behind
And was with Eddy thick.

—Where shall I turn? Whose muse will make me ready
To deal with this ridiculous Mrs. Eddy?

Leaving Lynn she took her bible
(Having, then, a bible written),
Went to Boston with her bible,

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Fed no pigeons on the Common,
Working hard in Boston.

Said the dead she'd bring back life to,
Make the sick and crippled over,
Teach all comers how to conquer
Flesh and body's spirit for a
Flat three hundred.

"She asserted she could restore the dead to life, walk upon water, live without air."

Sent out copies of her bible,
Watched its circulation flourish,
Built a church and called it Mother,
Fixed the Lord's Prayer up to suit her,
She no Hiawatha.

"Copies for review were sent . . . with the request that nothing at all be said about the book if the notice could not be laudatory."

—Oh, I must beg your pardon
If I in this cradle rocking
Fall asleep and fail again to
Make my lady's case heroic.

Mary Baker of New Hampshire.
Mary Baker of New Hampshire.

The phrase sticks like a burr.

VII

I spend my winters a thousand miles from the sea.
Images of the beaches and the long grass,
And pools left in the rocks by the tide, and flats
Scattered with driftwood, and shells—all of these
Come to me singing as out of caves, as I
Struggle to rise out of sleep, climbing, descending,
And look out my cold window at the snow.

Images.
These are mine, I say, mine
From the beginning, my beginning, but I
Wonder, if they are mine, why they forever

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Fail me? Why are they bare, those flats, those
beaches,
Why do they come to me, wordless, singing,
As in the beginning,
The same old childish music as I climb, descend
And climb again, and age, and find no means—
No words, powers, programs, grand designs—
To make them do my bidding,
But music only,
Their music. Why?
Is it that I
Am a barren god and may not
Say, let there be warmth, let there be breeding,
But must dictate only sand and yet more sand, and lay my own
World waste, and look out sadly on it through my window?

"That was a curious performance, with the magician, suave and smiling, forcing himself through his exacting repertoire, while every gesture and motion was a torture."

I do not know.

Gentlemen,
When God looked down on man and saw the wickedness,
He repented and was grieved and said that Noah
And his wife, and two
Of every living thing—one male, one female—
Would alone be spared; and then He sent
The rain to do His bidding, and for forty
Days and nights it rained, destroying
All flesh that moved on earth
Of fowl, of cattle, of every creeping thing,
And of man,
but the ark
He spared, and when the waters
Sank God came to Noah, saying
Be fruitful; multiply; replenish earth, My
Earth. And thus
Out of the waste, out of the whirlwind,
Up from the desert flats where the water buried
One world, yet another grew and God
Then blessed it,
but I . . .
Gentlemen . . .

"Samuel Insull wept, Brother Martin wept. The lawyers wept . . . there wasn't a dry eye in the jury."

"*after fifty years of work*, he said, *my job is gone.*"

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KENNETH BURKE

The Poetic Motive

As regards questions of motivation: Apparently we must begin by treating the act of symbol-using as an "unmotivated motive," at least as viewed from the standpoint of practical purpose.

If man is by nature the symbol-using animal, then it should follow that, for the full manifesting of his essence, he must find some intrinsic satisfaction in the use of symbols simply for the sake of symbol-using.

Perhaps this statement, on its face, is not so much an "explanation" as a tautology, somewhat like Molière's burlesqued "explanation" that opium puts people to sleep because it has "dormitive powers." The formula seems merely to be saying, circularly, that man uses symbols because he is the typically symbol-using animal, and he is called the typically symbol-using animal because he owes so much of his development to the use of symbols.

True, there are good empirical grounds for beginning with this formula, no matter how "circular" or "tautological" it is. The evidence of man's great dependence upon terminology (as contrasted with the use of such resources by other species) is obvious enough. But our purpose in affirming this truism now is for a use to which it may be put, in throwing light upon problems of poetics. For it indicates in what sense a "poetic" ("aesthetic," "artistic") motive can be considered "prior" to all "purpose," if by "purpose" is meant some aim more specific than the mere manifesting of its own essence. The difference we have in mind would be like the difference, say, between using symbols to earn a living and using symbols simply because one liked to exercise one's ability to use symbols.

Eyes and ears are instruments utilized in the business of survival. But there is also a "prior" sense in which the eye could be said to see, not "that the animal may survive," but "because it is of the nature of an eye to see." And the eye sees rather than hears because it is an eye rather than an ear.

In this same "truistic" sense, regardless of what role man's symbol-using faculty may have played in his survival, or what

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dangers to his survival there may be in the inept use of this faculty (as with the ways in which spellbinders, "aided" by advances in physics, chemistry, and psychology, may goad whole peoples to the destruction of one another), there is a sense in which the sheer exercising of the symbol-using faculty, in and for itself and without respect to further benefits, should gratify a symbol-using animal, quite as a bird must be gratified in being "free" to fly or a fish in being "free" to swim (and not just to the ends of "survival," but first of all because such are the ways whereby these different natures can most fully "be themselves").

In this sense, not even "play" would adequately describe the "poetic" motive in its essence, any more than we could say that the heart is "playing" when it pumps blood or the lungs are "playing" when we breathe.

In fact, we might say that the "first deflection" from an understanding of the poetic (aesthetic, artistic) motive occurs when we seek to place it in terms of "play." Since our ideas of play are shaped by contrast with the great emphasis we necessarily put upon the practical, utilitarian, pedagogical, moralistic purposes of everyday life, "play" thus becomes conceived too clearly as the antithesis of "use," and thus the tendency is for the aesthetic motive to be considered directly antithetical to use, whereas in its essence it is in a different plane from either use or the opposite of use.

The earlier critical injunction that art be "amusing as well as instructive" says in effect that art is ideally both playful and useful. We are here kept from getting at the poetic motive in its simplicity, since we explain it instead as a combination of two superficially contrasted motives. And in time this view developed another kind of quasi-unification, since play itself was conceived of as a species of use (both in the sense that play makes for healthy relaxation and in the sense that play is a preparation for work, as when a kitten, by playing with a string, prepares itself for the more serious business of catching mice, or as children, by playing with blocks, learn modes of behavior that will equip them for constructive acts as adults).

In sum, though "play" comes close, it is not close enough. For the more closely you inspect the term, the more clearly it is seen to have the wrong implications. And perhaps the worst feature of all is its association with childhood, or even with the pre-symbol-

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using stage of *infancy*, or with the conditions of young animals that will never use anything but the mere fragmentary beginnings of symbols. When artists, philosophers, scientists, mathematicians, and the like, at the height of their maturity, are engrossed by the architectonics of symbolism, surely it is misleading to see in such activity a mere survival from the "infantile," though it may be *accidentally* true that an over-engrossment with the resources of a symbol-system may prevent a thinker from encountering the full range of the experiences that "normally" lead to a well-rounded state of maturity. But this is true of specialization in any sense—and must apply also to persons who are victimized by the need to spend their lives in kinds of utilitarian work that blunt those free symbolistic exercisings now usually placed under the heading of "imagination."

The kind of distinction we have considered in the relation between "play" and "work" gets a further development of this sort: Insofar as man's symbol-using enterprise in the realm of politics and morals builds up complex legal and moral codes for the real or imaginary protection of property and of the institutions built around the amassing and utilizing of property, there are incentives for poets to get "poetic" effects by exploiting the problems, or "tensions," that arise from such situations. Thus, once man's symbol-using genius has been forcefully and systematically employed in the formulating of secular or theocratic laws that lay down what "thou shalt *not* do," the situation is set for the poet to entertain us by imagining characters who *do* do these very things, sins or crimes, which the law-giver has forbidden.

Particular literary species, such as tragedy, satire, the picaresque novel, detective or mystery stories, meet these conditions in varying ways. And the same applies to comic portraits of villains or fools, who involve us by "imitations" that variously violate the "proprieties" of behavior. Here also would belong, of course, the kinds of "catharsis" that Aristotle associates with the "tragic pleasure."

This aspect of symbol-using applies particularly to drama, as viewed from the standpoint of the *negative*, since any legal or moral proscription, by defining a "temptation," sets the conditions for the imagining of a character who yields to this temptation. (Thus, the law "Thou shalt not kill" sets the conditions for the story of a murderer; and "Thou shalt not steal" sets the conditions for the story of a thief, etc.)

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We thus see how the sheerly symbol-using faculty can become associated with all sorts of "deviational" or "criminal" tendencies. And often such tendencies are taken to be identical with the poetic (aesthetic, artistic) motive, whereas they really arise antithetically to another aspect of the symbol-using genius, the proliferation of laws. André Gide's "esthetics" of crime is an almost perfect development of this emphasis. But though such trends should always be taken as a major resource of poetic sensibility and mobility (or even of poetic "cure," in giving expression to human discords that would otherwise become still more troublesome through escaping the controls of terministic clarity), this situation is "derivative" rather than "primary," so far as the symbol-using motive in itself is concerned. Note, for example, the many forms of art (for instance, lyrics depicting moody responses to nature) that seek to "reflect the proprieties" by saying the "right" thing, rather than by imagining grim or funny "deviants" who reflect the proprieties *in reverse*, by doing the "wrong" thing. And, of course, even in works that reflect the proprieties in reverse by specializing in the depiction of villains and fools, there are often characters that exemplify the same code of morals "positively," by representing not the "vices" but the corresponding "virtues."

Motives of monetary profit, power, prestige, political or moralistic propaganda can carry us still further from an appreciation of the symbol-using motive in its "chemical purity," though they do have a real effect upon a specific artist's imagination, and they must be discussed when we consider a work in its totality, as the "portrait of a personality."

In sum, we might reduce the "intrinsic" delights of symbol-using to four:

(1) "Expression" as such. We put this satisfaction first, though with some misgivings. For "expression" has its origin in a mode that probably lies outside the kind of symbolism we associate with language proper. "Expression," as so conceived, begins in the realm of interjections, spontaneous outcries, gurgles, and the like, that have their start in infancy. But however sheerly "animal" such modes of expression may be at the start, things later become quite different. For by the time the human animal has become a "person," and has mastered whatever complex symbol-system

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happens to constitute the language of his tribe, such "spontaneous" modes of expression take on many elements intrinsically symbolic in the linguistic sense. For instance, the oath may begin in the sheerly physical shriek of an infant enraged by pain or frustration of its will; but with the adult the oath takes on forms derived from a fairly complex rationale of theological doctrine or social proprieties.

(2) The hortatory aspect of language. Its use as petition, persuasion, inducement to action, etc. Its nature as *addressed* to someone. This strongly communicative function of language soon becomes of great practical importance (as the infant, when acquiring the resources of speech, learns to use language as a way of influencing the acts and attitudes of those who minister to its needs); yet we would contend that intrinsically this communicative aspect of language is *formal* rather than *utilitarian*. Language, by its sheer nature as a mode of communication, is a kind of *address*, or *appeal*, or *petition*. Or, if we seem to be over-formalizing a function that should be treated rather in terms of biological adaptation, let us bargain by restating our position thus: Even if you do begin by placing the stress upon communication as a purely biological function, a purely *formal* consideration is still to be taken care of. For implicit in the very idea of language as a medium for communication there is the fact that the design of *speaker* and *speech* is not completed until we add a third term, the receiver or *auditor*. So, in this sense, a purely formal consideration, a statement about an underlying *pattern* or *design*, is found to figure. (Incidentally, in this purely formal sense, that has to do with the idea of language as *addressed*, it would seem that, whether or not there really is a personal God, the idea of God is implicit in the formal nature of language as a medium of communication. For, from the standpoint of purely linguistic formalism, "God" would be the term for the idea of an *ideal audience*, or *audience in general*, or *listener in the absolute*. "God" would be the grandest conceivable object of address, to round out the communicative pattern, of speaker, speech, and spoken to.)

(3) Intrinsic also to language is its nature as *naming*. Here arises the correspondence (and the distinction!) between the symbol and the symbolized (between the *word* "tree" and the *thing* tree). In one sense, it is the ultimate marvel of language (as we realize when we read of what is surely the most moving moment in all

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the history of human speech, Helen Keller describing how the world opened to her, when she suddenly grasped the principle of naming, by suddenly realizing that the set of pressures to which her hand was being subjected by an attendant while the hand was held under water were intended as a *sign* for water—whereupon, given her exceptional natural intelligence, she could quickly go from one thing to another, receiving a different indicator for each thing thus designated, and thereby building up a whole treasury of names for felt but unseen objects).

The average person comes upon this insight gradually, almost imperceptibly. But by reason of the fact that her privation of sight and hearing (and thus of language) had kept her from encountering this revelation until she had well passed the age normally spent in "infancy," she could of a sudden intuit this principle (the principle of a "conventional" or "arbitrary" correspondence between a sign and the thing signified). No other moment, it seems to me, more startlingly illustrates the genius of man's symbol-systems.

Also, the *referential* aspect of such namings, the bearing that words have upon non-verbal matters, can impart a unity (real or imaginary) to the things named, insofar as the structure of namings is infused with a unifying spirit.

But unfortunately, if the correspondence between the thing and the name or sign for the thing is at the very center of human genius, it also accounts for much human stupidity, when people turn from the fact that things can have names to the assumption that for every name there must be a corresponding thing. From this naive brand of verbal realism is derived a vast clutter of supernatural and quasi-metaphysical vagaries that make it almost impossible for a human being to see in simple clarity the motives by which mankind is moved.

Further, the words by which man learns so ingeniously to read the non-verbal signs of nature and thereby to guide his actions also become a kind of fog or film interposed *between* him and the non-verbal aspects of nature. For if man is helped to understand nature by the medium of his terminologies (his "reason"), then by the same token his terminologies establish between him and the non-verbal ground of his verbalizing a *distance* probably not felt by kinds of organism whose relations to nature are more direct.

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This distance probably makes for a kind of permanent "split" in the human consciousness. For a wholly consistent world would be possible only if all words could be reduced to non-verbal things and operations ("matter") or if all the realm of the non-verbal could be transformed wholly into words ("spirit"). Since neither of these "perfect" extremes is empirically possible, a kind of "split" seems inevitable to the symbol-using "consciousness." Thus when theorists call for a world-view that will avoid the distinction between "mind" and "body" and will treat the two realms simply as one, they are in effect asking us to obliterate the necessary empirical distinction between the very human realm of symbols ("action") and the non-human realm of the non-symbolic ("motion") in which the sheer animality of the human animal is grounded, and which thus serves as the necessary non-symbolic scene for man's symbol-ridden acts.

(4) To the intrinsic delight in symbols as expression, as address or communication, and as naming, we should add the "architectonic" or "developmental," the engrossment in tracking down the implications of a symbol-system (as when a geometry, for instance, is *reduced* to a set of definitions, axioms, and postulates, and then various propositions are demonstrated to be *deducible* from these principles—or when, looking closely at one term, we discover a whole cluster of ideas implicit in it and disclosable by methodical analysis of it). The most sustained gratification of symbol-systems is in such contemplation of the interrelationships prevailing among the terms of the system.

Viewed thus terministically, the unfoldings of a fiction can be interpreted as the progressive revelation of the potentialities implicit in the work's informing coordinates. We tend to speak of the characters in a novel or a drama as though they were actual people, though in reality they are but a set of "key terms," so modified by other terms that they guide our creativity as readers, enabling us to imagine them as "people," and so related to one another that they "mesh," thus variously activating one another in ways that lead to the over-all development of the plot. They are just as truly key terms as are the key terms of a philosophic or scientific treatise; and, conversely, if you look closely enough at the key terms of such a treatise, you will find that they themselves can be interpreted as "characters," variously activating one another like *dramatis personae*. In fact, we might say that the names

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of the characters in a story or play are "Key words, given a special meaning by their place in one particular symbol-system." To say that each step in a well-formed story prepares for the next is but to say that, by revealing one level of implications in a set of interrelated terms, the author establishes the conditions required for the revealing of further implications. Reading a story to the end is like staring into the dusk, until the eyes gradually become accustomed to the darkness, and more and more things that were there from the start become visible.

We would thus explain the successive "disclosures" of a plot formalistically, as the working-out of implications (or self-consistencies) internal to a given symbol-system; but such appeal has also been explained in terms of "learning," since each new step in the development is like the imparting of further "information" or "news" about the given subject.

There is a sense in which all four functions (expression, communication, designation, and self-consistency or development) can be seen to implicate one another. Whenever one "expresses himself," for instance, by using a certain interjection, exclamation, oath, or such, he has also used a communicative resource, insofar as his statement of attitude conveys significance to a real or ideal auditor. And such expressions have an ingredient of designation, or "naming," insofar as they in effect "classify" a situation by offering the kind of "title" that "sums it up." Thus, for instance, if on one occasion, in a fire, we call "Help! Help!" and on another occasion, when near drowning we call "Help! Help!" we have in effect classified these two situations under a common head, despite the vast number of particular details in which the two situations may be different. We have in effect given them both the same name, by reason of an essence (their identity as "Help! Help!" situations) that they share in common. And such "entitling" is also an aspect of the "developmental," by the very fact that its nature as a title gives it a *summarizing* function.

In closing we might note how, whether or not there be a personal God, all these four functions of language come to a head in the notion of a "god-term," purely as a technical implication of symbolism. Thus, the most absolute expression of attitude is perhaps embodied in the "sacred syllable oom," a tonal imitation of perfect universal contact, hence involving an idea of absolute

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communication; and it functions as both "designative" and "developmental" inasmuch as it is offered as the title of titles, the summary of summaries, for the symbol-using animal's relation to a hypothetical absolute that transcends all symbol-systems.

Whereas theologians have said that "reason" leads us to "God," for our purposes we must replace the honorific term "rational" by the neutral, empirical term "symbol-using." Then, since "God" by definition transcends all symbol-systems, we must begin, like theology, by noting that language is intrinsically unfitted to discuss the "supernatural" literally. For language is empirically confined to terms referring to physical nature, terms referring to socio-political relationships, and terms describing language itself. Hence, all the words for "God" must be used analogically—as were we to speak of God's "powerful arm" (a physical analogy), or of God as "lord" or "father" (a socio-political analogy), or of God as the "Word" (a linguistic analogy). The idea of God as a "person" would be derived by analogy from the sheerly physical insofar as persons have bodies, from the socio-political insofar as persons have status, and from the linguistic insofar as the idea of personality implies such kinds of "reason" as flower in man's symbol-using prowess (linguistic, artistic, philosophic, scientific, moralistic, pragmatic). The word "god" itself is apparently related to a Sanskrit word, *hūta*, meaning the called-upon, the invoked, the implored, hence fitting most directly under our second category, of the *addressed*, the *absolute audience*.

However, the nature of language is such, that each of the four functions we have attributed to language as a purely empirical structure leads to one or another of the directions that attains its "absolute" in an idea of God. From this situation, two totally different sets of conclusions can be said to follow: (1) language "points towards" the existence of God; (2) "God" is "nothing but" the "logical conclusion" or "reduction to absurdity" of "absolutizing" processes intrinsic to the nature of symbols—that is, "God" is not "The Word," "God" is but *a word*.[1]

[1]We have omitted a further basic consideration here, involving a concern with the word as "creative," or "formative," another facet that, in its "absolute" aspect, is equated with the "godlike." This subject has been treated in connection with our speculations on orientation, transformation, "exorcism by misnomer," and resimplification (in *Permanence and Change*), on "secular prayer" (in *Attitudes Toward History*), and on "rebirth" (in both these books and *The Philosophy of Literary Form*).

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In any case, one thing is certain: Whether language "leads to God" because of a divine design that language should direct man not only doctrinally, but even by its sheer form, towards God as its Creator, or whether "god-terms" are but an accidental tendency of language, resulting from the dialectical fact that language, in its function as entitlement, drives towards completion in the form of an over-all Title of Titles, in either case the same fundamental admonition prevails: Empirically man remains an animal marked by a specific power or weakness that is neither divine nor sheerly animal, his faculty as prime user of symbols.

His peculiar job, then, in living according to his nature, is to steer between the sheer "materiality" of the conditioned animal and the "spirituality" of pure symbolizing (a dialectical spinning that can easily be confused with the "godlike"). He works best as a perpetual student, smilingly morbid, tragi-comically warning himself about the powers and limitations of the symbol-systems he necessarily lives by and thinks by.

In this sense, whatever may be the ultimate ground of all possibility, the proper study of mankind is man's tendency to misjudge reality as inspirited by the troublous genius of symbolism. But if we were trained, for generation after generation, from our first emergence out of infancy, and in ways ranging from the simplest to the most complex, depending upon our stage of development, to collaborate in spying upon ourselves with pious yet sportive fearfulness, and thus helping to free one another of the false ambitions that symbolism so readily encourages, we might yet contrive to keep from wholly ruining this handsome planet and its plenitude.

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RENÉ CHAR

La Paroi et la Prairie

LASCAUX

Homme-Oiseau Mort et Bison Mourant

Long corps qui eut l'enthousiasme exigeant,
A présent perpendiculaire à la Brute blessée.

O tué sans entrailles!
Tué par celle qui fut tout et, réconciliée, se meurt;
Lui, danseur d'abîme, esprit, toujours à naître,
Oiseau et fruit pervers des magies cruellement sauvé.

Les Cerfs Noirs

Les eaux parlaient à l'oreille du ciel.
Cerfs, vous avez franchi l'espace millénaire,
Des ténèbres du roc aux caresses de l'air.

Le chasseur qui vous pousse, le génie qui vous voit,
Que j'aime leur passion, de mon large rivage!
Et si j'avais leurs yeux, dans l'instant où j'espère?

La Bête Innommable

La Bête innommable ferme la marche du gracieux troupeau, comme un cyclope bouffe.
Huit quolibets font sa parure, divisent sa folie.
La Bête rote dévotement dans l'air rustique.
Ses flancs bourrés et tombants sont douloureux, vont se vider de leur grossesse.
De son sabot à ses vaines défenses, elle est enveloppée de fétidité.

Ainsi m'apparaît dans la frise de Lascaux, mère fantastiquement déguisée,
La Sagesse aux yeux pleins de larmes.

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Translations by DAVID PAUL

The Wall and the Prairie

LASCAUX

Dead Bird-Man, Dying Bison

Long one, possessed with that demanding possession,
Perpendicular now to the wounded Beast.

Oh, bowel-less, and killed!
Killed by her who was all and dies now, reconciled;
A spirit he, dancer of the abyss forever to be born,
Bird, evil fruit of magics, cruelly redeemed.

Black Stags

A talking of waters in the sky's ear.
Stags, you have crossed through millennial space,
From rocky darkness to the kiss of the air.

Here from my wide banks, how I feel the passion
Of the driving hunter, the watching spirit!
And what if I saw with their eyes, in this instant of hope?

The Beast Without a Name

Like a comic cyclops, the Beast without a name winds up the procession of the graceful herd.
Eight quibbles decorate her, dividing up her madness.
The Beast belches devoutly in the rustic air.
Her crammed and hanging flanks ache, ready to release her womb.
From hoof to futile horns she is wrapped in a fetid haze.

There she is, in the frieze at Lascaux, our mother fantastically disguised,
Wisdom, with her eyes full of tears.

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Jeune Cheval à la Crinière Vaporeuse

Que tu es beau, printemps, cheval,
Criblant le ciel de ta crinière,
Couvrant d'écume les roseaux!
Tout l'amour tient dans ton poitrail:
De la Dame blanche d'Afrique
A la Madeleine au miroir:
L'idole qui combat, la grâce qui médite.

TRANSIR

Cette part jamais fixée, en nous sommeillante, d'où jaillira DEMAIN LE MULTIPLE.

L'âge du renne, c'est-à-dire l'âge du souffle. O vitre, ô givre, nature conquise, dedans fleurie, dehors détruite!

Insouciants, nous exaltons et contrecarrons justement la nature et les hommes. Cependant, terreur, au-dessus de notre tête, le soleil entre dans le signe de ses ennemis.

La lutte contre la cruauté profane, hélas! voeu de fourmi ailée. Sera-t-elle notre novation?

Au soleil d'hiver quelques fagots noués et ma flamme au mur.

Terre où je m'endors, espace où je m'éveille, *qui* viendra quand vous ne serez plus là? (*Que deviendrai-je* m'est d'une chaleur presque infinie).

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The Young Horse with the Vaporous Mane

Horse, splendid you are as spring,
Sifting heaven with your mane,
Strewing your foam over the reeds!
All love is packed in your breast:
From the White Lady of Africa
To Magdalene in the mirror,
Battling idol, meditative grace.

SHIVER

That migratory area, slumbering inside us, from which Tomorrow the Many will spring up.

Reindeer age, age of breath, that is. Oh glass, frost, nature subdued, within flowering, without laid waste!

Carefree, we exalt and counter-poise man with nature equally. And meanwhile—terror—over our heads the sun is entering the sign of his enemies.

The strife against profane cruelty, urge of the flying ant. Our re-issue, will it be?

Winter sunshine, a few tied bundles, and my lamp against the wall.

Earth I fall asleep on, space where I wake, *who* comes when you are gone? (*What will become of me?*—an almost infinitely warming thought.)

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QUATRE FASCINANTS

Le Taureau

Il ne fait jamais nuit quand tu meurs,
Cerné de ténèbres qui crient,
Soleil aux deux pointes semblables.

Fauve d'amour, vérité dans l'épée,
Couple qui se poignarde unique parmi tous.

La Truite

Rives qui croulez en parure
Afin d'emplir tout le miroir,
Gravier où balbutie la barque
Que le courant presse et retrousse,
Herbe, herbe toujours étirée,
Herbe, herbe jamais en répit,
Que devient votre créature
Dans les orages transparents
Où son coeur la précipita?

Le Serpent

Prince des contresens, fasses que mon amour
En exil analogue à ton bannissement
Échappe au vieux Seigneur que je hais d'avoir pu,
Après l'avoir troublé, en clair le décevoir.

Revanche à tes couleurs, débonnaire serpent,
Sous le couvert du bois et en toute maison.
Par le lien qui unit la lumière à la peur,
Tu fais semblant de fuir, ô serpent marginal!

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FOUR CYNOSURES

The Bull

No, it is never dark when you die,
Ringed by shrieking shadows,
Sun, with your two identical points.

Love's wild beast, truth in the sword,
Self-stabbing couple, whom we isolate.

The Trout

Banks crumbling to jewelled frame
To fill the whole of the mirror,
Gravel where the boat lisps
Jostled by the hurrying current,
Grass, grass, forever combing out,
Grass, grass, never at rest,
What's become of your creature
In the transparent swirls
Where her heart plunged her?

The Snake

Prince of inward contradictions, let my love
—In exile equal to your banishment—
Escape the ancient Lord, whom I must hate because,
After troubling, I could openly deceive him.

Snake of compliance, recompense your colours
With the shelter of the wood, the shadowing house.
By way of that which binds terror and the light
—Marginal snake!—you are always pretending to vanish.

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L'Alouette

Extrême braise du ciel et première ardeur du jour,
Elle reste sertie dans l'aurore et chante la terre agitée,
Carillon maître de son haleine et libre de sa route.

Fascinante, on la tue en l'émerveillant.

LA MINUTIEUSE

L'inondation s'agrandissait. La campagne rase, les talus, les menus arbres désunis les uns des autres s'enfermaient dans des flaques dont quelques unes en se joignant devenaient lac. Une alouette au ciel trop gris chantait. Des bulles çà et là brisaient la surface des eaux à moins que ce ne fût quelque minuscule rongeur ou serpent s'échappant à la nage. La route encore restait intacte. Les abords d'un village se montraient. Résolus et heureux nous avancions. Dans notre errance il faisait beau. Je marchais entre Toi et cette Autre qui était Toi aussi. Dans chacune de mes mains je tenais serré votre sein nu. Des villageois sur le pas de leur porte ou occupés à quelque besogne de planche nous saluaient avec faveur. Mes doigts leur cachaient votre merveille. En eussent-ils été choqués? L'une de vous s'arrêta pour causer et pour sourire. Nous continuâmes. J'avais désormais la nature à ma droite et devant moi la route. Un boeuf au loin, en son milieu, nous précédait. La lyre de ses cornes, il me parut, tremblait. Je t'aimais. Mais je reprochais à celle qui était demeurée en chemin, parmi les habitants des maisons, de se montrer trop familière. Certes, elle ne pouvait figurer parmi nous que ton enfance attardée. Je me rendis à l'évidence. Au village la retiendraient l'école et cette façon qu'ont les communautés aguerries de temporiser avec le danger; même celui d'inondation. Maintenant nous avions atteint l'orée de très vieux arbres et la solitude des souvenirs. Je voulus m'enquérir de ton nom éternel et chéri que mon âme avait oublié: «Je suis la Minutieuse». La beauté des eaux profondes nous endormit.

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The Lark

Extreme ember of the sky and first glow of day,
She stands, a jewel mounted in dawn, singing the shaken earth,
A chime that is master of its breath and free to choose its way.

To kill this enchantress, strike her with wonder.

THE SOUL OF DETAIL

The flood was still rising. The cropped fields, the banks, the tiny scattered trees, standing alone from each other, were islanding in pools, and some of the pools were joining into lakes. A lark was singing in the deep grey sky. Here and there bubbles broke the surface of the water—or was it some tiny rodent or snake swimming for its life? The road was still clear. The outskirts of a village came into sight. Resolute and happy, we walked on. Inside our vagrancy the sun was shining. I walked along between You and that Other who was also You. With each of my hands I gripped tightly on your naked breasts. Villagers, on their doorsteps, or busy about some job of carpentry, gave us a friendly greeting. My fingers hid your miracle from their eyes. Would it have shocked them? One of you stopped for a word and a smile. We went on. Now I had only nature on my right, and the open road in front of me. In the distance, a bull, in his own world, walked ahead of us. I seemed to see a trembling in the lyre of his horns. I loved you. But I had a feeling of reproach for that other one, for being too familiar, stopping back on the road, among the house-dwellers. Certainly, between us, she could only stand now for your delayed childhood. I gave in to what must be. In the village she would be caught up in a school-day world, in the way of life of a community hardened by calamity, ready to put up with it. Even with the flood. And now we were reaching the fringes of some ancient trees, the solitudes of recollection. I wanted to find out your eternal, your beloved name, which my being had forgotten. "The soul of detail," you said. The beauty of the depths of water lulled us asleep.

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JOSEPH BENNETT

The Mirror
The Face in the Mirror

Where are the years? Where are the years?
The trees scatter their heavy fruit.
And love, like a curded apple, drops,
And its taste on your mouth is like a heavy-cast fruit
And the bitter scent, the taste of that fruit
Is like the pit on your mouth,
The heavy-cast, fallen pit of a fruit,
An olive, or some fruit where the stone is large,
And the pulp slight, and the pulp, melting quick in your mouth,
Leaves you with the bitter stone, big in your mouth,
Heavy-cast
And it is your mouth, the stone of a fruit
And it breaks in on you, twisting your face,
And it is your face.
Love

Once gone away, never to return?
And it is your face
This heavy-cast pit of a fruit,
Twisting in on you, this stone that is your mouth.
Stone of a fruit.
Is this my face?
Love, love before a mirror, tells us
Of the vanished years, melted quick as a fruit,
The slight pulp, fragile, dissolved in our mouths,
And the stone, heavy, remaining.
Is this my face?
Love, love, tells us of the fragile years,
Melted, before a mirror, dissolved in our mouths,
The thin mist of a pulp, gone in our mouths,
Leaves us with a stone.
It is always a stone.

Suck away the pulp of years, dissolved in your mouth,

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And find the heavy stone.
It is not fragile. It is enduring.
It is you.

Is this my mouth?
Have I drunk away the years,
Eagerly, fretfully, cautiously, in agony of fear,
But they are gone.
However you have used them,
They are dissolved in your mouth.
And you have the stone.

Is this my mouth,
These withered lips that once were bright,
A bright face dissolved in dust,
Mortality creeping through the eyebrows.
I die, but every year the dust grows brighter
And the face less bright.
Is this my face? Before a mirror
Mortality tells us
The face is crumbling into dust
But the dust is brighter

The dust is brighter
Than you were in your years of plumage,
My brilliant cockatoo,
And now as the face turns to silver
And the dust around the eyes to gold,
These hollows, great patches of flesh
That once were firm

Love tells you
Before a mirror,
There is a stone in your mouth,
A great, heavy-fruited stone.
Look.

It is your years, gone by,
Fragile as a mist,
That have left you with a stone.

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This is all you have.
Fragile memories, bitter ones?
The pulp is gone, dissolved,
The years gone by.

But the dust is brightening.
I ask the years, whither have you fled,
And they, of my youth, say:
We were never there, you took us, flying,
Forgetting our days, our months, our weeks,
And we leave you with a stone.

How can I recapture the years?
They are gone, nymphs in infinite dresses,
Intangible, unfelt, receding presences.
There is laughter in the echo of them.
We are gone, we are gone, they cry, receding,
Gesturing, in their dresses,
And their echo presses its mouth to earth.
We leave you with this year, they cry,
Pressing their mouths to earth, faint, falling,
This aged matron whom you clasp at your mirror
Shall be our memory, of our infinite dresses,
Our nymph-like ways,
You shall clasp this well-busted matron
And think of our ways, our years, our habitat.
Having chose caution, you left us,
To spin by, years of your youth,
Untouched, the nymphs of your days
And we leave you, alas,
To find pleasure in other arms.

Pleasure?
A fruit.
I find a stone.

Yes, but the stone is experience.
It is a good stone.
It is your mouth.
Look, look, look in the mirror,

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The dust grows brighter.
Your face is brighter than it was in its days and glory,
When we formed you, fresh and new and untouched,
We, the years, formed you.
Now take your mouth, accept it.
Eat of this bitter fruit, the stone.

Take the stone.
By God, we gave it to you.
Formed of the years, take it
Large and bitter in your mouth.
Look, in the mirror,
Your face brightens, your dust brightens,
Because of the stone.

It is a note of cheer we wish to bring you.
Fragile years, gone years, yes,
But a hard core we have left you,
You used up the years, yes, violated them, broke them,
Each nymph has a tear in her eye for your ignorance and folly
How could you not take their gift?
How could you let them go, empty-handed?
Never to return?
Lost, lost, who can recall the years?
Love, love, it leaves a bitter fruit, a hard-stoned, bitter fruit.

Was it to have been love, then, that was the years?
Were these lost opportunities Love, Love, Love?
As the very old tell us.
Their physical passion consumed in a memory of flame
That never was, the very old lust of the ancient?
As the goat kicks his heels?
Should each nymph then have a rent in her robe
At that place, to show she had been violated
And bloody, carry the years in a perpetual menstruation
Of the loins?

And the loins bleed, in all years,
Faster and more urgent in the later ones,
But that was not the specific message.

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Love, love, that robust matron who calls you now
Was not sent by the nymphs to torment you
With memory of their fragileness
Nor the rent in their dress.
We do not discuss the area of the loins,
Though it is present.

I wish to make another distinction.
Love, love, it is the memory of the years
Passing by, that leaves us with this bright dust in our faces.
Look, look at the mirror, all is not lost.
The caverns, the hollows, the sockets.
I see a face that time burned, and left with a heavy fruit in its mouth,
The pit of a stone.
Alas, the brightness grows
As the years consume
And the very old expire in a radiance of brightness
That consumes the sockets and the eyelids.
Or so we would have it.

Why not accept the brightness?
God-given, that face, once so smooth,
Was not cast in marble for the ancients to gaze upon
Nor was it salvaged from some sunken galley
(The Mediterranean is full of the bones of ships)
I see the curve of time playing on the lips of experience
And I see a bright eye flashing
Where formerly a dull one shone.
All is sheen, all is gloss
Until time breaks through the mold
And the quickly-furrowing wrinkles turn the face to dust
So that mortality, presaged in the visage,
Comes quickly to be the symbol of the face
And all who look at you know that you must die
And it is a question of how many years.
Were the young immortal?
Where are the nymphs, the years, gone with their echoing laughs, the sighs?

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Look at the bright-faced youth on the streets.
There is nothing in them, it is all vision, no depth.
We would extend deeper, in other reference,
And let the wrinkles blossom suddenly over us
As a sign that we have known.
What did Pilate ask, What is Truth?
Do we still ask this, do we need to ask?
You have the answer in your faces.

And all things shall be open to you, once you accept the earth.
You would be as gods, knowing both good and evil?
You would cast yourself down, but not strike your foot against a stone?
You would turn the stones into bread?
Questions asked by youth.
The angels will not bear you on their hands.
Look, all the dominations and powers, the Kingdoms of the World,
Are yours if you will cast yourself down,
And strike your head against a stone.
The stones made bread?
Take this stone in your mouth,
It will not become bread.
O, the Tempter is dead,
This frightful horned monster gives way to the question the proconsul asked
Of the man before his throne.

Of the years, years before the mirror,
Memory of knowledge, memory of youth,
Innocence and experience,
We ask the final question
That the proconsul asked.
He is with us, he is with us,
To the end of the world.

I would know.
I have seen the two coins,
The head of Caesar's, the head of God's.
Should I choose?

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Choose? Look in the mirror for the answer.
And the heavy years plod away, that once were light,
And the nymphs turn to stone.
That stone will break open in your mouth,
All light exploding from a stone
And your face brightens.

Choose, choose? What is Truth
The proconsul asked.
Look in the mirror.
Catch the years, if you can.
They have fallen like stones.
It is a message of cheer we wish to bring you, here at this center point—
Hang there for a moment, vatic, seeing both ways

Our eyes are lidless and we see every direction
Like a blank statue scanning the horizons

I see, in the direction of Rome, where the proconsul died,
And I hear the noises of spring,
Outside my window
And the smells of memories so sweet
They break open the crust of mortality once again
And the furrows spread,
O how many Springs can we stand,
Before we are killed of them?
How strong is the flesh?
And how it rebels, at the sound of horns, the splash of oars, the memories of fruits and scents, the blue sea, memories of sky?
We look down from headlands
On the cobalt gulf
And the sea is shining
The lemon and the orange trees are in blossom
There are horns where the almond ripens near a broken column
And I see the shape of Etna, a white mist hovering above a cloud
Ah, we were born to suffer.

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What the proconsul asked.
How it rebels, the flesh,
Against our reasoning,
That would kill it, and its passions and memories
The years are deep-sunk in the flesh,
In the sunlight days, and all their bitterness and sweetness returns
at unexpected moments
When we are least ready, when we are most ratiocinative.
We lived then, it can be said then, that we had our moments,
That some fragments of the nymphs' dress remain in our hands?
How difficult is the spring, how it haunts you, and awakens you,
months before its time:
It was a difficult winter,
We would know, the secret of the branch that begins to blossom,
Or would we know the blossom?
If youth would know the blossom
And age the secret of the branch,
What then is the question the proconsul asked?

I see the gulfs of Etna
Surrounding that volcano
And all the sweetness of the season there
Surrounds us like wine, like paradise,
Intolerable ecstasy, the air like wine,
The sea, so pure, the flowers
And I am dying with the ecstasy of the flesh
That would rejoin the earth
And would create, in its turn, new flowers, new scents
By the huge, red-cast ancient jars.
And I look in the mirror and I see
That it is not for me.
Love, love, the nymphs have slipped by
Leaving some fragment of their dress in our hands
And the question of the proconsul in our mouths.

Shall I open the stone?
Can the mouth hold it,
Will the face be destroyed?
In brightness?

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Shall the knowledge of good and evil
Opened in our mouths
Cast us forth from the garden
Like Adam and Eve with the stone of that fruit bitter in their mouths.
The taste of the stone of that fruit, the bitterest fruit that man has tasted,
Driven from the garden?
The angel appeared with a flaming sword,
Now the mist of Etna hovers above our heads
Above evocative clouds,
Impossibly near,
Seeing the terraces, fresh and free, down to the sea,
That incredible blue of springtime and the awakening earth,
A blue patterned against slate.
I have seen it, I have seen it, April and May in this enchanted land,
Then why am I driven forth?
How can one be on earth, in this season, and not be there?
Regardless of the face in the mirror, that harrowing mortality
That furrows and tunnels its way through your flesh
Like an encouraged blight, or a fungus?
Can we not grow old in the garden,
Before the flies come,
The mosquitoes, the rain, the cold, and the wind and the heats,
The tramontane wind, that chills the bone, shattering the villages
The hot wind of Africa, the red breath of the desert
And cholera and typhus takes hold of the people?

Driven from these slopes, grown old,
A wandering German said:
I fill you with the fullness of my delight.
Having locked that garden in my heart
I enjoy its scent forever.
We doubted; the flesh is too passionate, too strong.

But what of that question?
We return to it.
I propose questions for which there is no answer.

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The proconsul sits, Pilate, on his throne, waiting.
We speak.

A fruit turned in the mouth to a stone
Is a symbol of love matured and earned.
So that its knottiness and graininess become part of its flavor, its savor.
The bite of a stone hard as rock
Is better than a fruit,
The pulp is less earned than the pit;
And the memory of the pulp dissolves
Leaving you with this pit.
Chew on it, the curd of experience,
Taste its slow delights,
So that the Mountain can be naked, no snow, no fire, no sea or blossom,
Only the headland in its bare rock, the empty volcano,
Even the broken column gone on the point
And you stare at blank distance.

Without relief.
I do not want relief.
The flesh cries, but its cries become less strident,
Less anguished,
And you conquer.
The mind conquers
The snake,
I have seen that reptile slithering away through the garden
And I do not choose to follow him.
And he is gone
And the garden gone with him.
What is Truth?
The garden was his creation,
Supreme fabricator, illustrator of the dreams of the Created,
Not of the Works of the Creator,
Whatever the fabrications of distance that the Tempter makes
You must withstand them and let the flesh scream in the night,
Distance is all,
Discipline is all.

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I think, as the mind spans these hidden arches,
Hidden aqueducts from the possible to the real,
We have seen the snake
And we have answered the question.
Driven from the garden,
What is there to fabricate?
The colors folded up, like a rug,
Like a map snapped shut on its roller,
The scenery is being carted to another location, another theatre,
And the flesh cries out in memory of what was only an illusion,
A few cubic miles of rock, gallons of water, sexual organs of plants,
odors to attract the pollenizing insects
We seek the secret of the branch, not the flower.
And what we saw there, in the odors that break the heart in spring,
Was not there, but in our hearts,
So that the heart seeks itself, perpetually self-devouring.

I no longer ask, but state.
The heart is all mirrored, a secret chamber,
Perpetuating its reflections so that no proportion of light is ever lost,
And the sealed system, intact,
Preserves its integrity like a senseless tub.
The reflections of yourself planted there, as the snake creeps away in the garden,
Leave you cold in the end and exhausted.

Take this stone in your mouth, and chew on it.
Let it fill your face with light
It will break, in the years,
And fill you from its inner core,
The tip of your tongue bright with hidden savor
The sharp bitterness of the core of the plum
The stone that gives utterance to the world, articulation to the heart,
That makes your whole throat an organ of speech
And your tongue a swift lance of intolerable ecstatic truth,
All brightness, all purity in the act of speech
That comes forth from the core of the apple

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And the apple is not the fruit of desire
And knowing both good and evil you go unpunished
For it is late and the garden is closed
Adam and Eve lost in the trackless waste, out of sight
Knowing both good and evil you shall be as gods
In that bright intolerable moment before breath closes and the tongue becomes a weapon, a lance of flame
And you join the effulgence of the dead.

Artemis

What Diana thought
As she stood in the brake
And transfixed the Hunter,
Her dogs leaping to the wounds
Two wounds fixed in the hands,
Two in the feet, the rest spaced
Evenly in the body.

What Diana thought
As she transfixed the Hunter,
Staring at her as she bathed,
That one should observe such nudity.
She turned, and all her mind
Was like a great meshing gear of a jewel,
Facets grinding coldly onto facets
And the crystal, sapphire wheels turn slowly,
As she turns, and transfixes the Hunter
With one glance from her brow.

Her brow dazzling with the bulge of sapphire
And her body blue-tinted and hard,
An image of her mind, which turns in on its wheels,
Divine, the mind is divine,

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The sharp, two-pointed pronged mind of Diana
As she bathes in the blue shadows of a pool
Lingering, in the blues of a forest.

Shaded Diana and her divine mind,
Hard and crystallic.
As she thinks the crystals
Drop from the trees.
The birds stop,
Transfixed.

Sister to Apollo, but more bland,
Artemis, she has laid her bow away.
The deer stop, transfixed, in the forest.
Their horns like crystals, frozen.

Why that Hunter came
And set in motion the Divine mind
Where before there was only a goddess bathing in a pool,
Surrounded by her creatures.

The eyes, the forehead,
The crystals turn,
Screwing in on one another,
In their verdict.

The animals stared,
The crystals dropped one by one
Into the pool.
Forming from the branches,
The pool rippled, in concentric spreads.

The dogs flew, in one motion,
In a paralyzed landscape.
Ripples that were in the pool
Crystals that were dropping overhead

The Hunter was pierced in seven spots,
Small fiery rubies in his transfixed flesh.
Who dared observe the daughter of the gods at bath.

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He rose,
Leaving casque and helm, and breastplate,
Gleaming with silver muscles, behind him on the beach.

Dazzlingly glowing, outstretched in the heavens,
And, in his rigidity, encompassing,
He enjoys the bliss that only immortality can give.
Who now calls to mind the dogs that tore him so cruelly
The Goddess that stared furious in that pool.

Sicily

At our backs
The snow-capped god-haunt
Reaching forearms to the sea.
Fins in the sea,
Bellies flashing through the wash.

On the benches, toil;
Foaming oars, flecked mouths;
Leather harness stinking in the sun.

Above the rocks the temples,
The altars with their smoke;
The priestess; suck of waves, flapping;
Cry of gulls.

Wine and corn
Crabs, spiny; roasted in pits
Calf-flesh thrown upon the rocks,
Cold pulp, bitter to the tongue.

Bronze columns, bodies in veils,
Breasts dark-nippled on the cliff
The red moon slants
The Cyprian, descending
To the rim.

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Calabria

Musically intangible, formal in difficulty
The sounds spiral up from the bubbling pool.
The mountain seeps downward in huge limestone
The spring wells upward at the base of the rock.

Porous and effervescent this gray crystal rock
As a vast sponge holding in cavities
Rains of the years and winter snows
And the bald peak too low to keep white in the summer.

Aspromonte, declivities, sudden coasts,
Fierce Apennines in their convoluted plunging
Ulysses haunts the boiling sea-pools.
Raging in and out, wearing the coast

Huge volumes of rock-torn water,
Tons of the sea, in among these sawed cliffs
All that salt can wear into a coast;
And slightly above, at the base of the cliffs

In pockets remembering trees, the fresh-water springs.
It was these springs, at the base of mountains,
Above boiling saw-tooth seas, that gave the idea of nymphs
And sirens, playing in placid pools

Above the tormented fresh-torn pools of sea,
And fresh water dripping from their flanks,
Pearled white, against the salt-boil raging beneath
And nymphs rising, among pines and firs

While beneath Aeolus rages and Neptune tears his teeth.
It is a gentler image that the mountains give us.
It is my country, city-questing; all this harsh limestone,
This gray, this bubbling foaming sea, and all this cleanness of the wind.

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PATRICK CRUTTWELL

On *Caleb Williams*

I SUPPOSE WE HAVE all heard of William Godwin. He exists, if he hardly lives, in that literary limbo peopled by those who were "connected with . . . ," who "had influence on . . . ," who are "of historical interest." We know him as the long-discredited philosopher whom Wordsworth and Shelley—it is hard to see why—were taken in by; we know him as the husband of the Rights of Woman and the father of Frankenstein; we know him as Shelley's comic-pathetic Micawber of a father-in-law. We don't, in fact, know *him* at all.

I would like to urge that we might know him, with advantage: that *Caleb Williams*, his first novel, is a living book. I began to read it as a duty; I found the reading both a pleasure and an excitement. The common reader, that lucky individual who does not have to read as a duty, has not today, as far as I have met him, read *Caleb Williams*;[1] a summary of the story may not be wasted space.

Caleb, who tells his own story, is "born of humble parents"; but he has "an inquisitive mind, and neglected no means of information from conversation or books." That "inquisitive mind" is to be his ruin. He is taken into the service of Ferdinando Falkland, a local grandee, "possessed of six thousand a-year": "a man of small stature, with an extreme delicacy of form and appearance." The small stature, the extreme delicacy, are to be the ruin of Falkland. Falkland, when the young Caleb first knows him, is a strange, a baffling character. He is full of sensibility and charm; he has "a profound and elegant mind, well stored with literature, and possessed of an uncommon share of activity and discrimination." But he suffers from an inexplicable melancholy, an "incessant gloom," which drives him at times to the edge of insanity. Caleb is puzzled and intrigued; he asks his friend Mr Collins, Falkland's bailiff, for an explanation; he gets it in the form of a narrative of Falkland's previous career—which narrative occupies the first part of the book.

[1]Neither Everyman nor the World's Classics reprints it: the latest reprint appears to be one of 1904.

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Falkland was not always (says Collins) the gloomy solitary he is now. "His youth, distinguished in its outset by the most unusual promise, is tarnished. His sensibility is shrunk up and withered by events, the most disgustful to his feelings." What Caleb sees now is "the mere shell of Falkland." In youth Falkland had determined to model himself on the standards of "romantic chivalry." He had spent some years in Italy, where he had taken part in several affairs of honour, behaving in all of them "in a manner that would not have disgraced the chevalier Bayard himself." Then he returned to England, to live on and improve his estates: from that moment, says Collins, "his misfortunes took their commencement."

For now he meets the person "in whom these calamities originated." This is Barnabas Tyrrel, a neighbouring landowner, "a true model of the English squire." He is a widow's only child, spoiled, little educated, brought up to be deferred to. "Everything must give way to his accommodation and advantage; every one must yield the most servile obedience to his commands." He is physically magnificent, the antithesis of Falkland. "His stature, when grown, was somewhat more than six feet, and his form might have been selected by a painter as model for that hero of antiquity, whose prowess consisted in felling an ox with his fist, and devouring him at a meal." But he is no fool and no nonentity; he is a formidable character, who has used his uneducated intelligence and bodily prowess to make himself the tyrant of the local society, men and women, whom he dominates by a blend of bonhomie and ferocity. "Every mother taught her daughter to consider the hand of Mr Tyrrel as the highest object of her ambition. Every daughter regarded his athletic form and his acknowledged prowess with a favourable eye."

When Falkland returns, Tyrrel's ascendancy is threatened. Falkland's qualities, the opposites of Tyrrel's, are just what those wearying of the latter's tyranny are looking for. Everywhere that Tyrrel goes, he hears the praises of Falkland. "Such dignity, such affability, so perpetual an attention to the happiness of others, such delicacy of sentiment and expression! Learned without ostentation, refined without foppery, elegant without effeminacy!" Tyrrel's resentment is the eternal blend of envy and contempt which the physically superior can feel for the intellectually superior and socially more acceptable. "Mr Falkland he described as an animal that was beneath contempt. Diminutive and dwarfish in

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his form, he wanted to set up a new standard of human nature adapted to his miserable condition." Tyrrel's is the perpetual snarl, half-comic, half-pathetic, of the natural barbarian at the civilized man. When Falkland has written a poem much admired by the company, who have just heard it read, Tyrrel's reaction is that of a sulking schoolboy:

> He had sat silent so long, that he seemed ready to burst with gall and indignation. Mighty pretty verses, said he, half talking to himself, and not addressing any particular person: why, aye, the verses are well enough. Swearing—I should like to know what a shipload of such stuff is good for.
>
> Why surely, said the lady who had introduced Mr Falkland's ode on the present occasion, you must allow that poetry is an agreeable and elegant amusement.
>
> Elegant, quotha!—why, look at Mr Falkland! In the devil's name, madam, do you think he would write poetry if he could do anything better?

And worst of all, the ladies desert the barbarian for the Man of Feeling.

> They could not help remarking the contrast beween these two leaders in the fields of Venus, the one of whom paid no attention to any one's pleasure but his own, while the other seemed all good humour and benevolence. It was in vain that Mr Tyrrel endeavoured to restrain the ruggedness of his character. His motive was impatience, his thoughts were gloomy, and his courtship was like the pawings of an elephant.

Falkland intervenes, with an attempt at conciliation. His intervention merely makes things worse, for "there was an apparent loftiness in his manner that could not fail to irritate; and the very grandeur with which he suppressed his passions, operated indirectly as a taunt to his opponent." Tyrrel's resentment sharpens to obsession, obsession to the brink of madness. His brooding soliloquies have a queer grotesque force, poised between the ludicrous and the tragic.

> "This Falkland haunts me like a demon. I cannot wake, but I think of him. I cannot sleep, but I see him. He poisons all my pleasures. I should be glad to see him torn with tenterhooks, and to grind his heart-strings with my teeth. I shall know no joy till I see him ruined. There may be some things right about him; but he is my perpetual torment. The thought of him hangs like a dead weight upon my heart, and I have a right to shake it off."

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The stage is set for catastrophe. It comes through two episodes in which Tyrrel finds outlet for his impotent fury by victimizing others—substitutes for the invulnerable Falkland. He has a tenant-farmer, one Hawkins, whom he has previously benefited; but Hawkins thwarts him in a minor matter—Tyrrel wishes to employ his son as "whipper-in to his hounds," but Hawkins, who has higher views for his boy, refuses—and Tyrrel's benevolence turns overnight to tyranny. "From this moment Tyrrel was bent upon Hawkins' destruction." By a series of oppressions, legal and illegal, he achieves it: Hawkins and his son are ruined and dispossessed, in spite of Falkland's intervention (another cause of grievance for Tyrrel), and disappear from the neighbourhood, and, for the time being, from the story. Tyrrel then turns on his second substitute-victim, his niece and ward, Emily Melville. She, unwittingly, plays on Tyrrel's obsession by constant praising of Falkland; Tyrrel suspects she is in love with him; jealous and maddened, he tries to force her into marriage with a certain Grimes, chosen as the antithesis of Falkland.

> Grimes he selected as being in all respects the diametrical reverse of Mr Falkland. He was not precisely a lad of vicious propensities, but in an inconceivable degree boorish and uncouth. His complexion was scarcely human; his features were coarse, and strangely discordant and disjointed from each other. His lips were thick, and the tone of his voice broad and unmodulated. His legs were of equal size from one end to the other, and his feet misshapen and clumsy.

Emily resists, with more spirit than Tyrrel had expected; he meets her resistance with a series of persecutions rather like those of Richardson's Pamela; they end with a near-rape (Falkland, inevitably, comes to the rescue) which is followed by her death.

This finally destroys Tyrrel's reputation in the country. The "rural assembly" decides to refuse him admittance. He defies the ban and comes. The other men—Falkland is not yet present—strive to shame him into leaving, but his old ascendancy reasserts itself.

> He seemed to be fast advancing to the triumph he had promised himself. The whole company were astonished. They felt the same abhorrence and condemnation of his character; but they could not help admiring the courage and resources he displayed upon the present occasion. They could without difficulty have concentred afresh their indignant feelings, but they seemed to want a leader.

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They get their leader when Falkland enters. He outfaces Tyrrel with a thunderous oration, and the latter slinks out. But "in about half an hour he returned . . . in the interval he had intoxicated himself with large draughts of brandy." He knocks Falkland down—"with one blow of his muscular arm, levelled him with the earth." Falkland rises; Tyrrel knocks him down again, and then, "kicked his prostrate enemy, and stooped apparently with the intention of dragging him along the floor." Others intervene; Tyrrel goes out. Falkland soon follows him, and "one other event closed the transactions of this memorable evening. Mr Falkland was baffled of the vengeance that yet remained to him. Mr Tyrrel was found by some of the company dead in the street, having been murdered at the distance of a few yards from the assembly house".

The physical assault is the turning-point of Falkland's life—at least, as interpreted to Caleb by Mr Collins. Falkland's notions of "romantic chivalry" are utterly outraged by a bodily humiliation: he feels like a raped woman. "This day," says Collins, "was the crisis of Mr Falkland's history. From hence took its beginning that gloomy and unsociable melancholy of which he has since been the victim. No two characters can be in certain respects more strongly contrasted, than the Mr Falkland of a date prior and subsequent to these events." He is suspected of having done the murder; is examined by the magistrates, and acquitted. The Hawkins', father and son, rediscovered living in obscure poverty, are accused in turn, found guilty, and hanged.

This ends the first part of the story. Now Caleb, so far merely a listener, becomes a protagonist. Satisfied at first with Collins' version, he soon begins to doubt. Hawkins' character worries him: it is not, he feels, the character of a murderer. He begins to wonder: did Falkland do it? Now there enters that "inquisitive mind" of Caleb; he in his turn develops an obsession, an itch of curiosity, a passion to find out the truth against all his own interests. He spies on Falkland, finds a letter from Hawkins which strengthens his doubts, is at last caught by Falkland trying to open an iron chest in the hope of finding incriminating documents. At last he drives Falkland to a confession: he had indeed done the murder, he had allowed the Hawkins' to suffer for it. He was forced to that infamy because (in his own words) he was "the fool of fame," determined to leave behind him "a spotless and illustrious name." Now, he says, Caleb,

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in his frantic and triumphant curiosity, has destroyed himself: who would believe his story—for which he can show no proof? Caleb is bound to Falkland for life. "Do you know what it is you have done? to gratify a foolish inquisitive humour, you have sold yourself."

The rest of the story is the verifying of Falkland's prophecy; it tells of his merciless persecution of Caleb. Falkland frames him on a false charge of theft; to answer it he accuses Falkland of the murder, but no one believes him and all regard him as a monster of ingratitude who robs and slanders his benefactor; he is imprisoned more than once, but escapes; he lives with a gang of thieves; disguised as a young Jew, he earns a living in London by Grub Street hackwork; he is twice thwarted in efforts to leave the country; wherever he goes, he finds that Falkland's agents are there, spreading the news of his infamy and driving him away; one of those agents, Gines, a thief and thief-taker, is himself infected with Falkland's passion of persecution and dogs Caleb's footsteps from refuge to refuge. Caleb is an outcast; Falkland, throughout this part of the story, remains in the background, an unseen spider whose web is ubiquitous.

But at last he reappears: horribly changed, a dying man.

> But now he appeared like nothing that had ever been visible in human shape. His visage was haggard, emaciated, and fleshless. His complexion was a dun and tarnished red, the colour uniform through every region of the face, and suggested the idea of its being burnt and parched by the eternal fire that burned within him. His eyes were red, quick, wandering, full of suspicion and rage. His hair was neglected, ragged, and floating. His whole figure was thin, to a degree that suggested the idea rather of a skeleton, than of a person actually alive. Life seemed hardly to be the capable inhabitant of so woe-begone and ghost-like a figure. The taper of wholesome life was expired; but passion, and fierceness, and frenzy, were able for the present to supply its place.

Caleb, in the last scene of all, forces him, for the second time (but now with witnesses), to confess the truth. Then he dies. Caleb is cleared, innocent in the eyes of the world. But not in his own eyes: Falkland has destroyed Caleb as well as himself.

> Meanwhile I endure the penalty of my crime. His figure is ever in imagination before me. Waking or sleeping I still behold him. He seems mildly to expostulate with me for my unfeeling behaviour. I live the devoted victim of conscious reproach . . . I thought that, if

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the guilt of Falkland were established, fortune and the world would smile upon my efforts. It is now only that I am truly miserable.

II

On *Caleb Williams* the conventional verdict affirms that excess of propaganda ruins its imaginative power. That its author's intention was propagandist there is no doubt. The book was the product not merely of an age, but of a moment, of political crisis: the moment of the State Trials of 1794, in which Pitt made his great effort, thwarted by the juries, to crush the Radical opposition to the war against France. The book's sub-title gives Godwin's purpose: *Things As They Are*—which readers of the foregoing summary (and of the book) may think a curious description. The preface, suppressed "in compliance with the alarms of booksellers," which Godwin wrote for the first edition confirms the intention.

> It is now known to philosophers that the spirit and character of the government intrudes itself into every rank of society. But this is a truth highly worthy to be communicated to persons whom books of philosophy and science are never likely to reach. Accordingly it was proposed in the invention of the following work, to comprehend, as far as the progressive nature of a single story would allow, a general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism, by which man becomes the destroyer of man.

The novel was to show, as we would put it, how individuals are conditioned by education and society, and to evoke sympathy for the persecuted and outlawed. Godwin, significantly, wrote the last part first—the tale of Caleb the hunted man: that for him (but not, I think, for the modern reader) was the centre of interest; he then wrote the story of Falkland and of Caleb's curiosity to provide a motive for the hunting. But the book survives its propaganda, goes wider than the situation and intention which gave it birth. It can be read—and this is surely one of the best proofs of life—in a way which is quite other than the way the author intended, but which does not falsify.

It is for us a study of obsessions. Falkland's is a fanatical worship of the sanctity of his body and fame; Tyrrel's, a raging against Falkland's inherent superiority; Caleb's, a passion to know; Gines's, a passion to pursue. All these, though in a way they may have been made possible by social conditioning, are not really caused by it. They are the peculiar obsessions of particular individuals. They can

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all, without straining, be put into modern psychological terms: a risky procedure, I admit, but it does work here. Falkland is the victim of a passionate narcissism, intensified by his knowledge of his body's frailty. Tyrrel's inferiority complex, with its most sensitive point in sex, is over-compensated by a desperate insistence on his bodily superiority. Caleb's response to Falkland is an ambivalence of love and hate. "I felt, what I had no previous conception of, that it was possible to love a murderer." Even in Godwin's own terms, his imagination seems to deny what his intellect affirmed. He shows his people driven by forces far older, far more mysterious, far nearer to the forces which govern ancient tragedy, than to those of his own easy and brand-new philosophizing. "Thus was I hurried along by an uncontrollable destiny." "It was a kind of fatal impulse that seemed destined to hurry me to my destruction." "He spared neither pains nor time, in the gratification of the passion, which choice had made his ruling one." "This was his ruling passion, the thought that worked his soul to madness." And the strained physical violence of the language confirms that impression. "Every atom of my frame seemed to have a several existence, and to crawl within me." "I felt the fangs of the tiger striking deep into my heart." Godwin the philosopher was clearly a child of the Enlightenment, begotten by the French Revolution on deist optimism and faith in human reason. His remarks on parenthood have the chilly unreality of Swift's Houyhnhnms; his theories of education are blandly and optimistically "progressive."

> Reasonable men then [i.e., when marriage has been abolished] will propagate their species, not because a certain sensible pleasure is attached to this action, but because it is right [why?] that the species should be propagated, and the manner in which they exercise this function will be regulated by the dictates of reason and duty.
>
> According to the received modes of education, the master goes first and the pupil follows. According to the method here recommended, it is probable that the pupil would go first, and the master follow . . . The boy, like the man, studies because he desires it. He proceeds upon a plan of his own invention, or which, by adopting, he has made his own. Every thing bespeaks independence and equality.

But what have such amiable fantasies to do with the twisted passions of *Caleb Williams*?

Very little, it seems; and it is natural to look for an answer in Godwin himself. Three points of contact can be found. Godwin was

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a classic instance of that classic English correlation of his age and later: Nonconformist background, revolutionary opinions. His grandfather, uncle, and father were all dissenting ministers; he was one himself, till he lost his orthodox faith, and Shelley's biographer, Hogg, writing of the Godwin of middle life, observes that his appearance was still "altogether that of a dissenting minister." And though his orthodoxy went early, he did not lose without difficulty—and we may suspect he never completely lost—his Calvinist fatalism. "All my enquiries," he says of his early studies, "terminated in Calvinism." Is this a clue to the "destinies," the "ruling passions," that drive the characters of his novel? They *are* predestined, but by causes too personal for any society to condition or any education to change. And two of those causes, we may guess, were personal to Godwin as well as to them. Godwin, like his Falkland, was a small man; Hogg describes him as "a short, stout, thickset old man," Hazlitt as "below the common stature—nor is his deportment graceful or animated." And Godwin's response to a birching at school, as he tells it himself, was precisely that of Falkland to Tyrrel's assault. "It had never occurred to me as possible that my person, which hitherto had been treated . . . as something extraordinary and sacred, could suffer such ignominious violation. The idea had something in it as abrupt as a fall from heaven to earth."

When one sees in the past a piece of thinking, which time has shown very clearly to be silly or shoddy, nevertheless taking an undeniable hold on men of undeniable greatness, this is perhaps the usual solution: the thinking in its own time, by chance of events or by the thinker's living character, was shot through with a life and excitement which could not outlast the person or the events. *Caleb Williams* can tell us why *Political Justice* made the effect it did. It shows a Godwin for whom the romantic poets could easily feel a kinship, who shared with them the tastes for nightmare, for abnormal psychology, for the thriller and mystery, and for the persecuted rejects of society. Wordsworth's poems about mad rustics, Shelley's youthful addiction to Gothick shockers, come from the same galley; the Ancient Mariner is a guilt-laden solitary wanderer like Caleb, and Hogg's Justified Sinner is another study of obsessions. In its crazy, violent, imperfect way, *Caleb Williams* is a living work of the romantic imagination. It should have its living readers. And it should have its new edition.

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ELDER OLSON

Mobile by Calder

A shoal of burnished fish
Suspended, feeding; sunset boats
Gently rocking, in harbor; perhaps a shower
Of falling autumn leaves that never fall;
Anything at all,
So that we understand invisible poise
Translated to visible balance,
Stillness to motion:

More than anything, like a new universe:
How pleasant that a man can make his own universe,
Where all the worlds are turning metal vanes,
And One does not always equal One,
One may equal Five or Ten or Twenty;
How clever an artist, to know that motion,
All motion, implies a point of poise,
All fictions turn upon a point of truth;

And to prove once more, by a new universe, more clearly seen,
That things, whatever they are, propose a principle
Without which they could not be, or be as they are,
And to say, thus, what ships, stars, leaves,
Fish,
And other things have been saying a long time,
Though until now, until now, we did not hear.

Preview, Informal

Look. Look. A jungle forest, sun-shot, branch-
Brown, leaf-green. Dropping down
From branch to branch a randy band of scarlet
Monkeys, snowy-ruffed, black-velvet-masked,

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Ruffle all the hanging strings of blooms
And falls of bell-flowers, yet do not startle
The haughty birds displayed here: macaws, toucans,
Crested parakeets whose sultry fans
Beat back the heat. The birds perch or fly,
But do not snap the dragonflies that strike
Like lightnings down the sun-drift. Look, look! Rippling
Coil on figured coil a giant serpent
Terrifies nothing, neither bird nor monkey.
The serpent yawns and shows a stripèd maw,
The birds swing on, turning indifferent eyes,
The monkeys leap and dangle. Look! through the bamboo grass,
Magnificent, lion-colored, kingly-curled,
A lion pads; behind him steps a deer.
The lion turns and roars one golden roar
And then lies down; the deer beds down beside,
Accomplishing, almost, the prophecy.
No blood has ever brightened the dark ground.
The jungle rings incessantly with cries
Yet these are not of agony or joy
But music simply, meaningless as the music
Of the stream wandering, tinkling as if in memory
Of dews and rains in caves and dells deep underground.
Confess this world is excellent and fair.
You are present in imagination only,
For else you could not see it; this is a world
Purified, perfected; an on-Second-Thought-and-
Better-Thought Creation; made after yours,
The one great Error rectified. Do you understand?—
Birds, beasts, insects, flowers, trees, are all
Automata; yes, yes, mechanical toys.
Come, come—was life so valuable, after all?
I especially like that lion-colored lion.

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ERNEST SANDEEN

Vacation Land

A rainy season darkened among the churches
That swung their cross above our speedway. Beaches
Were tan on Saturdays and browned our hides,
On Mondays a clean sun rinsed our lake in tides

Of sky. But feastdays clouded to a crisis
Where damp clothes hung an odor of mouldy spices
Down the altar rail. Thunder growled
Like poison from swollen clouds, the air blurred cold

And lightning twinkled twinges as of pains
From some imagined crucifixion. Sins
Could well have fired the morbid light in which
The Virgin materialized, a hooded witch.

Safe with six days' pagan weather, Venus
Laughed each week away with her Adonis
Sprawling on foamy sands and leaving glooms
To Christian orgies in the catacombs.

Faith on Friday

Never in my innocent unbelieving
Days could I have guessed that faith was this
Betrayal, this tangled murderous unrelieving
Love that ran to light me with a kiss

So all the surrounding darkness might thereafter
Know me and probe the old wounds of unbelief.
The angels who should have followed with trump and laughter
Came with staves and torches to catch a thief.

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I'd waited through my ages like the Jews
To be delivered. Long seasons I would peer
Through prayers for prophecies to turn to news
And then whole eras of me would disappear

Until disaster and a scrawny sage's word
Recalled me to the promise and its labors.
I never once had danced before the lord
Of my believing but for my sceptic neighbors

I had often capered. Now the word
Had come, not prophets now, but what they'd spoken
Of and spoken with. I saw his sword,
I knew it was the faithful would be broken.

The same three ancient crosses mark the hill
Where faith meets fate. Stretched on the doubting tree
The flesh of hope is hurt too deep to tell
If I did this to him or he to me.

A. R. AMMONS

11-25-56

The nights dark now
the moon rises with dawn
  a shallop on the sea of distant trees
    overtaken
  a thing
sacrificed before the golden coming sun
  a late unfailing greeter of my tears
Help me to love what
    vanishes and rest
Oh hold me white thing Achilles knew

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HARRY MATHEWS

The Pines at Son Beltran

If marriage is separation
"To meet again," where is that country?
The high pines bend
Seaward in slow acknowledgment of mountain wind.
Clouds coast over blurred blue water,
Away, whiteness heavy with gold.

At such a table should marriage be broken—
The square stone set with blue figs,
The young bride hiding among the red trunks,
Running (a little), with naked legs.
Sea-mirrored clouds are heavy with our loss.
The pines incline, for another reason,
Toward water that is pulled blue silk
Ermine-edged, wrinkled by mountain wind.
She has run past the trees into a field of rushes
Or some other sea-grass; but she is gone.
Who waits for her? The stone is bare.

The pines are fixed in a seaward posture.
Marriage is separation, and we
Who are ourselves most when we kiss
Practise for that lonely touching
In voyages on the sheeted sea
Toward unknown islands that must be found,
Mapped, and redeemed. The laden clouds
Glide to romance and rain; but the virgin bride
Will bear a child whose name is love, and die.
(And the white thighs gone in the sand and eel-grass!
The beauty was there; we can ask no more.)

"But where shall we meet again?" On the far
Face of the moon at the earth's eclipse;
Or never; or some afternoon in Budapest;
Or, at a square stone table set
With blue imaginary figs
And a view of the water, under these bending trees.

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SIDNEY MONAS

The Private Muse: Some Notes on Recent Russian Literature

"IT IS ONLY IN THE REALM of literature," wrote the critic Belinsky in 1846, "that we cease to be Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great. Only here do we talk freely as men about human problems. Our literature has already... created a kind of public opinion." Russian literature assumed such special, national importance in the nineteenth century in part at least because it was an assertion that life could not be dictated by Imperial decree; because, to modify a famous line of Pushkin's, it sang freedom in a dreary age.

Pushkin might on occasion celebrate the glories of Empire, but only because the celebration was genuinely in him. His muse was, as he put it, "a private girl," and she never appeared by ukaz. Dostoevsky belonged to the official Orthodox Church; but Father Ferapont, in *The Brothers Karamazov*, was far more typically Orthodox than Father Zosima, and Dostoevsky loved Zosima.

It is a great irony that the tradition of opposition to stiff, stark officialdom which Russian literature did so much to inspire culminated in the Bolshevik coup of November, 1917, and an officialdom of an entirely more formidable dimension.

Some writers emigrated, some remained. Many were sympathetic to the cause of the Revolution. Lenin spoke with great contempt of these "non-party literati," but during his lifetime it was still possible for them to live, and even to write. It was the doctrine of Socialist Realism, officially proclaimed in 1934, that sent the muse packing. Poets and novelists no longer had the right to entertain her. Only books and poems which described the world as a high-ranking party functionary might wish to see it could be published. The doctrine was not interpreted entirely consistently, and during the years of World War II, the muse warily returned. But in August, 1946, Zhdanov, speaking for the Central Committee of the Communist Party, seemingly finished her off.

Zhdanov attacked poet Anna Akhmatova for concentrating so much passion on "the drawing room, the bedroom, and the chapel," so little on the Five Year Plans, and satirist Michael Zoschenko for "slandering Soviet Reality," as though Soviet Reality were an actress of delicate reputation. Many writers scurried away from their own experience and tried to find something human in the past; but even through the beard of Ivan the Terrible, party critics insisted on seeing Stalin's red moustache. This was the bleakest age in Russian literature since the Mongol Yoke.

There is no reason why the freer post-Stalin atmosphere should in

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itself have brought about a literary revival. Something had to remain alive to take advantage of the relaxed conditions. Did anything escape the grim catalogue of poets dead by suicide and murder, writers exiled or silenced, artists crushed?

Russian literature, for one thing, remained; interpreted and taught, it is true, in the light of Socialist Realism. In this light, the docile student sees the great works of the past as fundamentally on the side of the party, the "humanist heritage" absorbed by Lenin. But even in the Soviet Union, not all students are docile.

A few gifted writers of integrity also remained. Among the fourth-rate journalistic hacks who interpreted party policy and ran the Union of Soviet Writers, a handful of lonely men like Boris Pasternak managed to survive. Unpublished for many years, attacked in the press, criticized by dolts, expelled from the Writers' Union and then readmitted, working long and scrupulously on his great translations of Goethe and Shakespeare, writing his autobiography which might never be published, writing occasional poems which might never be published, talking informally to young writers who came to see him, Pasternak remained the living breath of the old Russian intelligentsia. He is still alive and his poems have begun to appear in print again.[1]

The West, in spite of the Iron Curtain, remained. It is a mistake to overestimate the effectiveness of totalitarian repression. In spite of everything, a secret literature and a secret knowledge—shared only by a few, and never made public—persisted. Moreover, Poland and Hungary and Czechoslovakia were on the Soviet side of the curtain, and in the first two countries indubitably and probably in the third, writers much closer to the West than the Russians could be were formulating an attack on Socialist Realism and all it stood for. Russian writers had at least some communication with these countries; in 1954 and 1955 Writers' Congresses were held in Prague and Warsaw, which the Russians attended, and one can only speculate on what happened behind the scenes.

Above all, a human hunger remained, in writers and in their audience, which only the private muse could satisfy: a hunger for style and self-assertion, expressed sometimes grotesquely as in the phenomenon of the *stilyagi*, or Russian zoot-suiters, a hunger not unrelated to the by no means purely physical hunger for consumers' goods. The post-Stalin regime has found it necessary to make wavering concessions, and in their shadow one can catch an occasional fleeting glimpse of the still uncertain muse.

To be sure, Russia is not yet Poland, where the quiet revolution of writers and artists preceded the emergence of Gomulka by almost a year. There has been nothing like the direct attack on Socialist Realism

[1]Pasternak's novel, *Doctor Zhivago*, on which he had been working for some years, has plunged him into trouble again. Accepted by a Soviet publishing house in 1956, at the time of greatest relaxation, the book has not yet appeared in Russian. But a manuscript that somehow found its way abroad was published in Italian this past winter, after protests by Soviet authorities. An English version is due to appear shortly. Pasternak survives.

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sprung by Anton Slonimski and other Polish writers. Nor has anything yet appeared which could give very firm foundation to hopes for a new Great Age in Russian fiction or lyric poetry. There have been no new masterpieces, nothing like the poetry of Esenin or Mayakovsky, or the stories of Isaak Babel or Sholokhov's *Silent Don*, to say nothing of Pushkin or Dostoevsky. But if one remembers Zhdanov, one is heartened.

A story by D. Granin, "One's Own Opinion," deals with an official who will not save a subordinate from unjust persecution because he is afraid to jeopardize his own position in the hierarchy; a long poem by S. Kirsanov, "Seven Days of the Week," describes a mechanical heart which responds in a conveniently simple way to provided stimuli. There are poems about nightingales again. A poem by Akhmatova dated 1948 but previously unpublished has nothing to do with the wished-for world of the bureaucrats:

The clock ticks, one springtime replaces
Another, the sky lightens,
The names of cities are changed. . . .

It is a poem about old age in a lonely room, to which

People come as to a grave,
And, returning, wash their hands with soap.

A young poet, V. Goncharov, boldly titles a poem "I Hate". And what?

I hate the retouchers.
Nothing more terrible than their work. . . .

A child weeps
But the sly scalpel
Always breaks through,
And this boy
For joy to the world
Suddenly smiles.
Here is a dwarf—
Never grew up—
All very simple—
He stands higher
Than a poet's honor!
Here is the brute
Face of a scoundrel.
The scalpel is ready—
And on the portrait,
A family smile.

I hate the retouchers
Of the daily light. . . .

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The most interesting, and outside the Soviet Union, the most widely publicized recent book in this vein is the first novel of Vladimir Dudintsev, a young Soviet writer still in his twenties, *Not By Bread Alone*. Published in the journal *New World* (*Novy Mir*) in three installments, it will either not appear in book form at all in the USSR or else in a very much revised version. Reality is still that touchy.[2]

At home, the book aroused a riot of expletives, discussions, meetings, intense arguments, denunications; almost as though the atmosphere of the nineteenth century came back with it. Meetings of writers and critics convened to discuss this, in the party's eyes, rather dubious work have been followed breathlessly by university students and young intellectuals, whose grievances and aspirations the book expresses—sometimes with students actually climbing ladders and listening at the outside of windows. Abroad, the book's publication in England created an international incident, with protests lodged by the Soviet Embassy to the effect that an English translation based on Dudintsev's unrevised version would be taken as a national insult. Why all this excitment?

First, it is a good novel by an obviously talented young writer. Certain moods and certain kinds of situation—and these do not imply very nice things about Reality—are conveyed extremely well: the damp hopelessness of waiting in bureaucratic offices and corridors, the arrogance of an official giving orders over the phone, the dreariness of an old apartment building. In short, the novel has the breath of life, without which it would be nothing. Unfortunately, it is a breath which is for many pages still; but it is there.

The plot, if one thinks of it abstractly in outline, is conventional; so much so, that one suspects the author of deliberately mocking the stereotype. A bold and talented young inventor named Lopatkin, who has no official status—no academic degrees, no position in any hierarchy—has invented a pipe-casting machine. In trying to get his machine accepted for production he runs into the opposition of bureaucratic vested interests—an Academician who has invented an inferior machine of similar purpose, and Drozdov, a rising bureaucrat, who is Lopatkin's particular antagonist. A few sympathizers help and support Lopatkin, but official opposition is almost overwhelming. He loses his job, his sweetheart, and suffers enormous hardships, including a stretch of corrective labor in Siberia; but in the long run the superior qualities of his machine are recognized, and he is put in charge of its production. Novels not so very different from this one in outline have won Stalin Prizes in the past.

But beneath every turn of the plot there is an undertow which moves it in an unconventional direction. In the stereotyped Soviet novel, it

[2]It has appeared; an edition of 30,000 copies, small for the Soviet Union. Discussion has died down. The revisions seem relatively insignificant; it seems Dudintsev is as stubborn as his hero. In the above, quotations are in my own translation, since the English edition, at the time of writing, had not yet appeared: Dudintsev, V., *Not By Bread Alone*, translated, with an introduction, by Dr. Edith Bone, preface by the author. E. P. Dutton Co. $4.95.

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is common for the hero to suffer because certain deeply contaminated persons are out to get him. From the very beginning, these people (they may be enjoying a position of high power and prestige for the moment) intend evil; they are in the pay of a foreign power, they are wreckers or Trotskyites. In Dudintsev's novel, no such villains appear. There are occasional references to foreign espionage; the most pointed one is a joke—the half-mad Professor Bus'ko is afraid spies will steal his invention. The bureaucrats who try to smother Lopatkin's machine do so not because they are agents of capitalism, but because they are bureaucrats and Lopatkin is a non-conformist; because they belong to the system and he does not.

Drozdov is far and away the most interesting figure in the book. Short, squat, uncouth and extremely arrogant, his physical awkwardness is contrasted to his wife's beauty (she is almost a head taller than he, but soft and feminine), and his parade of self-confidence to her groping uncertainty and constant questioning. He is a man clearly on his way to the top, and he knows it and licks his lips. He is not genuinely intelligent, but a shrewd operator, and he has a certain flair for self-dramatization. When his wife criticizes his crude handling of subordinates, he in turn presents her with a picture of himself as a lonely, unrewarded, self-sacrificing hero:

> "My dear," he said wearily, sitting down beside her on the divan so it seemed that they were of the same height, "the point is this. Everything you say is nineteenth century. Literary stuff. I must say that *I* don't understand it at all. And I don't mind not understanding. So there. I can tell you this about my, as you put it—" he smiled—"*tactless* dealings with subordinates. My dear wife, people've got to be clothed and fed. So *we workers* look at the world just like this: 'the earth'—that's translated as *bread*; 'a snowflake'—that means *harvest*. . . . First the house has got to be built, then you can hang pictures up later. Have you ever noticed carpenters? They smell of sweat. But they build houses. I'm like that. I have all justice in my hands. I'll build the house. Then you can start hanging pictures and curtains and forget about me."

For Drozdov, people are things, objects to be manipulated. He expects nothing from them but his own advancement. The only person he tries to pull into his charmed, lonely circle is his beautiful wife, but she cannot hope to bring any old friends with her. "We can have no friends," he tells her:

> "A friend has to be independent, and everyone here depends on me. One is envious, another is afraid, still another cocks a sharp ear, a fourth is always trying to make his way. . . . Isolation, my dear; the purest isolation. And the higher we get to the top, the more complete it will be."

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Drozdov refuses to consider the merits of Lopatkin's machine simply on the grounds of what Lopatkin is. "I don't believe in the existence of these so-called *exalted* natures," he tells his wife. "If you admit the concept 'genius', then the concept 'rabble' has to exist beside it. . . . I am the heir of the rabble, of poverty. I'm the sworn enemy of these 'irreplaceables.'" To Lopatkin, Drozdov says:

> "We can do without your invention, even if it were really a big thing. We could pass it by and get away with it. Progress is in the plan. Let's even admit your invention is a work of genius. When the time comes, according to plan, the day for the problem to be solved which you try to solve elementally by yourself, our technical collectives will find the solution. The collective has more genius than any genius."

Clearly, this is no stock Soviet villain. He is not corrupt, he is not incompetent, he has not sold out to a foreign power. He simply is what he is. Nor does he suffer defeat in the end. Although Lopatkin's machine is recognized and Loptakin put in charge of its production, Drozdov remains where he was; his rise to the top is by no means interrupted, and it is clear that Lopatkin, if he is to survive, will have to come to grips with him again in the future.

In the stereotyped Soviet novel, the people who help the hero are usually experienced party members, and it is the party spirit (*partiinost'*) which triumphs over evil-doers. In Dudintsev's novel, the party is simply referred to incidentally, as one of the facts of life. Lopatkin's friends, though some of them are indeed party members, help him because they are kindred spirits, inventors themselves, or would-be inventors who understand the nature of the private muse. In spite of everything, an engineer named Arakhovsky tells Lopatkin, "a thinker can't help thinking." Professor Bus'ko, who is a complete outcast, who lives and works alone and has given up all hope that the inventions he works on so assiduously for their own sake will ever be able to pass through the bureaucratic filter into use, shares his room and his tools with Lopatkin because, he tells him, "I love fantasts who do not live by bread alone." Party officials, on the other hand, though they may be honest, well-intended people, if they do not understand the muse, cannot be counted on to help. Bus'ko first runs into Lopatkin in a newspaper waiting-room where Lopatkin is waiting to deliver to the editor an indignant letter denouncing the mossbacks who are holding back his invention. Bus'ko gently points out to Lopatkin that the editor is part of the system, after all. "How can Little Red Riding Hood know it's a wolf lying there in bed?" he asks. "You just try to call her worthy grandmother a wolf!"

Drozdov's wife is also a radical departure from the stock Soviet heroine, usually a chaste, stalwart maiden urging her chosen male on to glory, a terrible bore who trills love-talk consisting of tractor-production statistics or ecstatic accounts of how we will fulfill the plan together. Drozdova

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is different. She enjoys the wealth and the privileges her husband's position confer on her; but she has gnawing doubts about her husband's character. Finally, she deserts Drozdov (and her child by him) to help Lopatkin, with whom she falls in love. Unfortunately, Drozdova is still a bit of a bore, because the author is either too young or too timid to deal with the problems she raises in the novel. Her loyalty to Lopatkin is presented as a kind of higher loyalty to the State, because after all, Lopatkin *is* right, his machine *is* superior, and it's all very patriotic.

Lopatkin himself is really only disguised as the inventor of the previously mentioned pipe-casting machine. It soon becomes clear he isn't at all the type of the stalwart engineer. He is really presented as a poet, a creator, an innovator. He lives on what Bus'ko jokingly calls the "inventor's diet" of black bread and fish oil, which he pays for by working part time as a steeplejack. Working on a high roof, Lopatkin sees all Moscow before him, and he thinks sadly of all those people whose view of the city is limited to the perspective of the first floor, on which they live. "It is this first-floor philosophy," he tells Bus'ko, "that we have to fight." The poet's prophetic vision is bound to isolate him in his struggle with officialdom, because the first-floor people, however well-meaning they may be, do not see what the poet sees, and they usually support the Drozdovs.

There is a poster tacked to Lopatkin's apartment building, advertising property insurance. It shows a safe, happy family sitting down to supper. Lopatkin often stares at it. He feels with a pang of deprivation that he will never be part of such an intimate scene; at the same time, he is proud that his invention will make such scenes possible for other people, because it will help build more homes, create more privacy, more scope for the private muse.

At the end of the novel, Lopatkin finds himself, finally successful, at a banquet, during the course of which his former enemies and persecutors try to ingratiate themselves and to flatter him. As he looks at the bureaucrats, the log rollers, the career men, he says to himself, "I see I must become a politician, too." Lopatkin, whose very existence defies the system, is now going to struggle with it from within.

It is difficult to illustrate Lopatkin by quoting him, because although he is an interesting figure, he never seems quite real in the sense that Drozdov is real. He is rather a wished-for hero, not unlike Turgenev's Insarov in *On the Eve*. Suppose he had been wrong, suppose his machine had not been as efficient as that produced by the "technical collective"? Suppose he wrote poems or articles on Baudelaire instead of mapping a strategy for improved plumbing? The questions, I think, are implied in the novel, but it is not yet possible to discuss them openly and honestly in Russia. It may never be. The private muse, flitting in the shadows, still lacks the freedom of the open light. But it is as absurd to speak of a little bit of freedom as it is for a woman to say she is a little pregnant. There will be more, or none.

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Postscript:

This was written almost a year ago. Soviet literature has become less rather than more free since then, but it has not disappeared. Among novelists, Dudintsev has by no means been a solitary figure. Victor Nekrasov's *Back Home* (a French translation, *La ville natale*, has been published, but no English version) and Galina Nikolaeva's *Battle along the Way* (untranslated) have both appeared since Dudintsev.

Nikolaeva's novel (published in *Oktyabr'*, March-July, 1957) begins with a somber description of Stalin's funeral and goes on to say some hopeful things about the "transitional" Khrushchev era, but at its best (and it is very good) it is a study of personal loyalties inspired by the private muse. Again, the hero is interesting in spite of his triumphant usefulness to the party, largely because he has a living past and is deeply involved in a melancholy personal relationship which carries the real emotional weight of the novel.

When Bakhirev, the hero of *Battle along the Way*, thinks about "the contradictions that persist in socialist society," he thinks Khrushchevian cant, but when he reminisces over his childhood or broods over his talented, ironical, haughty mistress, and his helpless passion for her, in spite of morality, in spite of devotion to family, friends, party and country, the muse breathes through the pages and Tolstoy and Zola are with us again.

Bakhirev's parents had been people of talent who, under adverse circumstances, had taken to drink and gone rapidly downhill. His early childhood, in the single room the family shared, had been a horror:

> His parents' love was sometimes more frightening than their quarrels. And his father and mother and other drunken couples sometimes rolled on the floor there in that tight little room. . . . He remembered the intertwined bodies on the vomit-streaked floor.

He went to work at an early age, and, renting a room in the apartment of a relatively prosperous working class family, had his first experience of solitude:

> He was happy with the silence. . . . It opened a spaciousness of days and nights to him. Intact, unbroken by scandals or drunkenness, they seemed to stretch inconceivably into space. They grew out of the freshness of apples, out of the soft wind and the barely audible rustle of leaves. These nights it seemed possible to reach the very limit of knowledge. . . . He had a passion for mathematics. In the nocturnal silence, numbers flew to him like flights of birds and alighted on his paper as though they lived a life of their own. At a noise, they scattered frightened in all directions. . . . But he was rarely interrupted.

Thus, Bakhirev's grim past gives his relationship to his wife and children

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and to Tina Karamysh a certain poignance. No Soviet-grown hero of a Stalinist novel had been allowed an unhappy childhood.

Tina's childhood, happy and triumphant, is on the other hand contrasted with her melancholy present. Her autocratic temper, vivid imagination and fierce personal loyalties are as far from the red-star heroine as Anna Karenina from the Girl of the Golden West. As a girl, Tina learned to stand alone with the autonomy of a semi-barbarian Caucasian nomad. Later, married to an elderly, highly respected party leader (subsequently murdered by Beriya) she appears as a "white crow" among her fellow-students at the technicum. And her relationship with her husband is described as follows:

> Ignatii said jokingly that among her many gifts, the greatest was her talent for being a wife. . . . She caught his every wish without a slip and gladly submitted herself to it. Nevertheless, sometimes, when he intercepted her glance, he felt frightened.
>
> Her look was too submissive, too unruffled, too innocent. It began to seem to him that she remained with him only because she knew no one else. And at night, beside her, in a nagging sorrow over her, he begged: "So, Tina, embrace me. . . You embrace me. . . " Sometimes she obediently embraced, but sometimes there dropped into the darkness a brief "I don't want to."
>
> . . . . Mornings, when, slipping from the bed, she went to wash, there breathed such a bloom of femininity about her, that he hastened to draw the blanket up to his chin, ashamed of his slack muscles and gray skin.

Tina has talent, and "Talent has a face of its own, and is always debatable. Only mediocrity is undebatable."

Tina and Bakhirev, moved not so much by sex as by the poetry of possibility and the personal loyalty of equals, carry on an affair in a sleazy suburban room. Tina remarks wryly, "The socialist era is not adapted for adultery." They are interrupted by Bakhirev's wife. Bakhirev returns, with renewed effort, to his work; Tina, remembering Anna Karenina, thinks of suicide, but reflects that, in a way, it has already been done for her, and goes on instead to a new life, to work as an artist, to become, if one may put it that way, Galina Nikolaeva, the most promising of the younger Soviet novelists.

Meanwhile, Khrushchev has singled out Dudintsev for some rather rough criticism (not as rough, however, as Zhdanov's sardonic philistinism; the genial Secretary was willing to admit the novel had many fine points), and Nekrasov and Nikolaeva have been attacked by party critics. Some of the more interesting younger poets like Margerita Aligher and Semion Kirsanov (associated with two remarkable anthologies that appeared in the summer of 1956) have done some public breast-beating. The literary journals are somewhat duller. It is depressing, but not hopeless.

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B. H. HAGGIN

Ballet and Opera Chronicle

STRAVINSKY'S SUCCESSIVE WORKS have given us the results of the play of his mind on whatever musical material—whatever style of this or that composer or period—he happens to have been interested in at the moment; and parts of *Agon* sound like the result of his recent interest in Berg, Schönberg and Von Webern. My hearings of the piece thus far have made me aware of the operation of impressive powers in the making of it, but have given me little pleasure from the result. But pleasure has come, as in some previous instances, from the dance movement that Balanchine has devised for the music in the ballet presented by the New York City Ballet—dance movement which exhibits once again the powers in relation not only to his own medium but to music and the stage that make Balanchine one of the two or three greatest creative artists of our time. "The fact is," observed an actor and director I know after a Balanchine ballet, in the City Center a few years ago, "the important things that are happening in the theater today are happening right here."

A writer who had been gathering material for an article on Balanchine reported to me that some people in the dance world considered the weakness of his choreography to be that it was derived from and dependent on music. I answered that it would make as much sense to say that the weakness of Hugo Wolf's songs was their derivation from and dependence on the poems; and that a Balanchine ballet was in fact an exension of the music in very much the same way as a Wolf song was an extension of the words. The music in the Wolf song takes shape around the words as it points up their meaning; the movement in the Balanchine ballet fits among, around and across the notes of the music like an additional counterpoint that completes the texture and in so doing gives it an additional significance—the significance imparted, for example, to a crabbed-sounding motif or phrase in the music of *Agon* by visually exciting changes in an anything-but-crabbed-looking configuration of a girl's body or a larger configuration of several such bodies.

Much of this imparted significance in *Agon*—produced by the tight fitting of dance movement to the tightly-fitted-together sounds, in sequences of movement that are sharply angular and accented—is humorous. The movements in the two Pas de Trois are—in ways that are difficult to convey, since they are often matters of no more than the movements' angularity, energy, brevity, abrupt cessation, or their canonic imitation, or their exaggeration of charming or noble attitudes—very amusing to see; they make the music amusing to hear; and Balanchine says he had this implicit humorous character of the music in mind when he created the movements; nevertheless the music is not enjoyable by itself, and what delights one is what Balanchine adds to it. So with the

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climactic Pas de Deux to which all this fun leads: the "expressive" phrases of the music are in an idiom which is not a medium of expressive communication for me; and their expressiveness is therefore, for me, mere manner without reality; but they provide a sound-track for the successive involvements of the two dancers that hold one spellbound. It has always seemed to me that Balanchine's imagination operated at its highest potential in his invention for ballerina and supporting male dancer—the seduction in *The Prodigal Son*, the ominous "Hand of Fate" episode in *Cotillon*, the tender and playful pas de deux of the boy and his bride, the violent one in which the fairy possesses the boy, in *Le Baiser de la fée*, the poet's encounter with the somnambulist in *The Night Shadow*, the dance of Apollo and Terpsichore in *Apollo*, the Andante in *Concerto Barocco*, the third theme in *The Four Temperaments*. If one saw only one of these and nothing else of Balanchine's one would know him to be a great master; seeing one after the other and marveling at what he contrived, one has felt certain each time that his imagination could go no further; and then it has gone still further in the next. So now with the Pas de Deux in *Agon*, which takes its place with the great examples I have mentioned: it involves the bodies of the two dancers in astounding new intricacies which would appear to be the utmost the human could conceive of, but which are probably not the last conceived of by the mind of Balanchine.

The difficult piece was danced superbly; its two Pas de Trois in particular were delightfully executed by Todd Bolender, Barbara Milberg and Barbara Walczak, and Melissa Hayden, Jonathan Watts and Roy Tobias; and the Pas de Deux, with its unimpassioned intensity, had—as performed by Diana Adams and Arthur Mitchell in their cool, good-humored manner—overwhelming impact. The girl's part is perfectly suited to Adams' long-limbed body and her quiet temperament; and her performance was her most impressive achievement in my experience.

Agon got the most attention because it was a new work and a setting of a new Stravinsky score. But equally important was the revival of *Apollo*, a setting of Stravinsky's *Apollon Musagète* which Balanchine produced for Diaghilev in 1928. A ballet begins to be forgotten the moment it is no longer performed; and a number of great works that Balanchine has created in the last thirty years—notably *Le Bal*, *Cotillon*, *Mozartiana*, *Danses Concertantes*—have been lost in this way and probably will never be seen again. But in 1950 Balanchine managed to reconstruct *The Prodigal Son*, which he created for Diaghilev in 1929; and periodically he has revived *Apollo*, for which he appears to have an affection that is understandable, since it is his first classical ballet, in which he established the personal classical vocabulary and style, within the traditional classical idiom, that he has elaborated and extended in the works since then. This alone would make it a remarkable achievement for a man in his twenties; but in addition he accomplished it in a ballet which is not "a very young and dated effort" important only as "a historical milestone," as John Martin tried to get the public to believe, but is a wonderfully beautiful and great work of art, of the same stature as the great works

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that followed it. *Agon* amazes one with what Balanchine's imagination continues to produce after so many years; *Apollo* amazes one with what it produced at the beginning—the visually exciting and touching dance and pantomime metaphors that express Apollo's growing consciousness of his powers and describe his involvement with the three muses: the leaps around them that express his wonder and delight; the leaps that frighten them in the coda; the turns with which, fascinated, he follows Terpsichore's playful little hops; the exquisite episode in which he and Terpsichore sink to their knees facing each other, he holds out his open hands, she rests her elbows on them and opens her hands, on which he lays his head.

Those large-spanned, soaring leaps of Jacques d'Amboise around the muses had exciting expressive effect; and his performance gained in the continuity of flow and the expressive force of its detail at each repetition. His was of course the crucial performance; but the muses also were danced effectively—Terpsichore by Maria Tallchief or Diana Adams, Polyhymnia by Patricia Wilde, Calliope by Melissa Hayden. The later performances lost a little of the accuracy of the first ones; and in a piece in which every movement is so exposed, the few errors in the final performance stood out prominently, lessening the effect of the piece and the response of the audience.

Wonderfully imaginative too are the metaphors and images of *The Prodigal Son*, which the company announced but regrettably didn't produce because of the loss of rehearsal time to the televised *Nutcracker*—what was left being required by two of the new pieces, *Gounod Symphony* and *Stars and Stripes*. The first and last movements of Gounod's Symphony No. 1 seemed to me too small in scale and consequence for Balanchine's manipulation of large groups; but the second movement lent itself to a pas de deux of elegance and charm, and the third movement to an engaging minuet. As for *Stars and Stripes*, it is another illustration of the fact that what the Balanchine eye happens to see—whether it is American musical-show dancing or Scotch dances or modern dance—turns up in his ballets; and what turns up in this new piece is American parades and marches—the striding about, the falling into formations, the costumes (skillfully adapted by Karinska), the Sousa music (crudely arranged by Hershy Kay). The piece is one of Balanchine's brilliant and enjoyable "applause machines" (the term is his), and was danced brilliantly by Melissa Hayden, Allegra Kent, Diana Adams, Jacques d'Amboise, Robert Barnett and the corps.

In an earlier "applause machine," *Western Symphony*, to an arrangement of American folk songs, one saw the formations and the ducking in and out of formations of the American square dance; and this year Balanchine used them again in the enchanting ensembles that he fitted to the lovely music of Vivaldi and Corelli in *Square Dance*. Unfortunately, not content to use the dance style, Balanchine had the idea of putting the little group of string-players on a platform on the stage, and having a square-dance caller call out what the dancers did; "otherwise," he said, "it will be

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only another ballet, with Vivaldi music." And so the movements of great elegance were done to an accompaniment of appalling jingling words ("Now watch her feet go wickety-wack") blared out by loud-speakers and forced on ear and mind to a degree that made it impossible to hear the music and see the movments. What little I saw enables me to report that Patricia Wilde danced with exquisite delicacy and grace and that the ensembles were executed brilliantly by the corps.

In addition to these new pieces by Balanchine the company offered a repertory made up largely of his older works: *The Four Temperaments*, *Concerto Barocco*, *Divertimento No. 15*, *Orpheus*, *Symphony in C*, *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, *Serenade*, *Pas de Dix*, *Allegro Brillante*, *Scotch Symphony*, *Western Symphony*. With these there were Jerome Robbins' brilliantly perceptive *Afternoon of a Faun*, and pieces of his that I don't care for—*Pied Piper*, *The Cage*, *Fanfare*, the last however with its very funny "Percussion" episode. And also Todd Bolender's highly amusing *Souvenirs* and his uninteresting *Still Point*; Lew Christensen's amusing *Con Amore*; and Francisco Moncion's *Pastorale*, much of it a competent use of familiar materials, but achieving something individual and affecting in the encounter of the blind boy and the blindfolded girl.

Balanchine not only has created a great repertory; he also has created a great company to perform it. Under his guidance Maria Tallchief, in the past ten years, has changed from the dancer whose physical strength appeared to direct itself downward at the floor in leg movements like thunderbolts, to the dancer whose strength goes into achieving the appearance of effortlessness in slow turns and quiet movements of breath-taking plastic beauty; Patricia Wilde's dancing, a high-powered operation a few years ago, has acquired its present delicacy, suppleness and elegance; the other soloists have blossomed less spectacularly; the girls of the corps have acquired technical brilliance and a distinctively and excitingly clear and sharp style; and this year's changes in the boys' group gave it too the brillance it had lacked.

The company was, then, a pleasure to watch this year; and there was special pleasure in watching the progress of the younger soloists. Allegra Kent, for example, continued to compel fascinated attention with her exquisite modulation of bodily configuration, her clarity and exactness, her projection of personal radiance and force, with which she gave tremendous impact to the third theme in *The Four Temperaments*, and, on a less important but interesting occasion, quietly held her own in a performance of the Minkus *Pas de Trois* with higher-powered Tallchief and Eglevsky. And Robert Barnett, whose special style of acrobatic brilliance combined with delicacy makes the "Candy Canes" episode one of the most exciting things in *The Nutcracker*, was able to exhibit his spectacular gifts at length in *Stars and Stripes*.

But for some older spectators there was an aching feeling of loss over the absence of Tanaquil LeClercq from the works in which they had watched the development of her extraordinary powers as a dancer and a stage personality.

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Rudolf Bing of the Metropolitan is a man who seemingly exhibits intelligence, judgment and taste by producing Musorgsky's own version of *Boris Godunov*, but then produces rubbish like Giordano's *Andrea Chénier;* who lavishes new scenery and costumes on *Chénier*, but pieces together whatever odds and ends he can find in the warehouse for *Boris;* who got Eugene Berman to design beautiful and effective scenery for *Rigoletto*, but inflicted on *Don Giovanni*, a few years ago, a permanent set by Charles Elson that had the singers spending much of their time clambering over its ramp and had the ball in Act 1 and the dinner in Act 2 taking place in the street. This error Mr. Bing rectified by having Berman design the Metropolitan's new production of *Don Giovanni* this year; and Berman contributed sets which not only surpassed even his previous achievements in their visual beauty and evocative power, but were brilliantly contrived for the singers—in the magnificent costumes designed by Berman—to be deployed in the action on the stage, and for the many changes of scene to require only a few seconds each.

Using the stage areas and levels provided by Berman, Herbert Graf created a dramatic action which made sense most of the time. A notable example of his skill was the disposition and movement of the singers on two levels in the quartet "*Non ti fidar*"; but here he also provided an example of poor judgment: instead of allowing the spectator's attention to be concentrated on the four principals in the foreground, he distracted it with some comings and goings of peasants and tradesmen in the background. Again, the traditional extravagant gestures of Leporello in Don Giovanni's cloak and hat under Donna Elvira's window, culminating in a fling that spun him around in a complete circle, seemed to me incongruous in style, and something Dr. Graf should not have allowed. And surely, when Leporello sang "*Ah pietà, signori miei*," those whom he addressed should not have appeared to be paying no attention to him: only if they had been listening to him would their exclamations over his sudden disappearance have made sense. But these were the few flaws in an excellent stage performance, which Zachary Solov was allowed to mar with the fatuous twirlings he devised for the girls in the dinner scene.

As for the musical performance, I was apprehensive about Karl Böhm's addiction to slow tempos, and therefore agreeably surprised by his real Andante pace for the introduction of the overture and the animation of his pacing throughout; and his work with singers and orchestra was admirable. Of the singers Eleanor Steber (Donna Anna) was the dominating figure, with the beauty, the expressive power, the grandeur of style of her singing, the dramatic force of her acting. In the performance I attended the others in the excellent cast were Lisa Della Casa (Donna Elvira), Laurel Hurley (Zerlina), George London (Don Giovanni), who sang the Champagne Aria with a rhythmic accuracy I don't recall hearing from anyone else, Nicolai Gedda (Don Ottavio), whose breath almost gave out in one of the long florid passages of "*Il mio tesoro*," Giorgio Tozzi (the Commendatore), Ezio Flagello (Leporello), and Theodor Uppman (Masetto). In a later performance that I heard over the air

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Cesare Siepi was a rough-voiced Don Giovanni, and Roberta Peters a brassy Zerlina, but Jan Peerce surprised me with his beautiful phrasing of Don Ottavio's arias and a voice that was still agreeable. And still later there was a performance with a damaging last-minute replacement of Steber by Mary Curtis-Verna. But such minor differences and major accidents are unavoidable; and they do not make this new production of *Don Giovanni* anything but one of the Metropolitan's most distingushed achievements.

Mr. Bing, then, to repeat, is a man who on some occasions acts with intelligence, judgment and taste, but who on another occasion produces Samuel Barber's *Vanessa*. One can say of Barber what Virgil Thomson once said of another American—that he has written lots of music, which makes him a real composer, but that the music has been as standardized in expression as it was eclectic in style, which makes him not a real creator. A friend to whom I said this remarked: "In other words, old wine in old bottles"; and that can stand as the description of Barber's music for the claptrap of Menotti's libretto. It was no surprise, therefore, that the music proved to be the usual unoriginal assemblage of what Barber has heard the last thirty years—at one moment the modern dissonance of the orchestral prelude, ten minutes later the mellifluous idiom of Erika's first-act aria. But after reading in Professor Lang's review in the New York *Herald Tribune* how "varied, exceedingly skilful, and superbly executed" were Barber's "forms of what we have been hearing from Puccini and Strauss to Sir William Walton" in this "major contribution to the international operatic repertory," it was a surprise to hear how obvious—which amounts to saying how lacking in skill and effectiveness—the resort now to this device or style, now to that one (e. g. to the use of coloratura for Vanessa's gaiety) was. And it is shocking that this poor attempt at ersatz operatic glamor should have impressed Mr. Bing as deserving an expensive production which involved the talents of Cecil Beaton as designer of scenery and costumes, of Eleanor Steber, Rosalind Elias, Nicolai Gedda and Giorgio Tozzi on the stage, and of Dimitri Mitropoulos in the pit.

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THOMAS BARBOUR

Theatre Chronicle

JEAN ANOUILH, who likes to spin fairy tales for grown-ups, is able to express a sensitively and profoundly observed reality in terms of gay, yet careful, artifice. Now his *Léocadia* is with us at last, in an adequate, if uninspired, translation by Patricia Moyes, as *Time Remembered*. This story of romance put to flight by reality has sagacity and charm; it is "high theatre" all right (in Eric Bentley's phrase), but hardly an example of M. Anouilh's craft at its best. Since the point he has to make is a simple, though telling, one and he sticks to it with commendable single-mindedness, his plot seems insufficient to support a full-length play. As a result he is frequently constrained to tread water lest his revelations come sooner than he wants to make them, and we are usually able to beat him to his climaxes. A good third of the comedy is devoted to the Duchess's proposal to Amanda that she take the place of Prince Albert's lost Léocadia, and there seems to be no other reason for the old lady's eventually most aggravating hesitation to disclose her scheme than that the playwright had, somehow, to kill the time. Later, when the prince and Amanda finally get together, we are treated for the umpteenth time to a recapitulation of the facts of his past love affair, so that, in the midst of all the talk, we almost miss the delicious discovery that he really has no clear recollection of Léocadia at all. Finally, when the prince's dead love is at last renounced for the living Amanda, there is appended a closing scene involving some jarring symbolism borrowed from Chekhov's *The Seagull* where the Duchess's last speech alone might serve as an appropriate benediction.

Unquestionably the present success of *Time Remembered* is attributable to the elegance of the production that has been provided for it, and yet I think that production serves less to advance the merits of the play than to substitute for its deficiencies. It is most handsomely mounted, and a top-flight cast has been assembled to interpret it; yet, while I find little to object to strenuously among the individual performances, I cannot quite feel that the actors make up a really effective team. What we have is a series of diverting "rise-and-shines" and not an example of true ensemble playing. I am often a lonely champion of the talents of Helen Hayes, and on this occasion her gracious stage-presence is certainly not unpleasing to me; and yet I should prefer to see another actress in the role of the Duchess of Pont-au-Bronc, one with perhaps more flair for eccentric characterization than the blueberry-pie-normal Miss Hayes. Richard Burton, while playing in effect a romantic fool, projects the brooding sensitivity and essential intelligence of Prince Albert, so that I am led to hope that he will bring his Hamlet our way one of these days soon; but his suppressed performance and lack of variety brings him perilously close to dullness, a quality of which there is already quite enough in M.

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Anouilh's script. Some critics have taken exception to what they regard as vocal affectation on the part of Susan Strasberg, but it seems to me that her artfully mannered delineation of Amanda—so surprising in one literally born to the Method—captured the spirit of the play more exactly than any of the other performances. I must add, too, that the bumptious adolescent of *The Diary of Ann Frank* is turning into a most attractive young lady.

The confusions of Morton Wishengrad's *The Rope Dancers* arise wholly from within the playwright himself and have little to do with the humdrum practicalities of getting a play onto the boards and customers into the house. It is, in fact, one of the most uncompromising plays I have seen; if Mr. Wishengrad can maintain his integrity in the hurly-burly of Broadway, he may yet, in that respect at least, confirm his leading lady's premature contention that he is the finest American playwright since O'Neill.

There are ample opportunities for sentimentalizing in *The Rope Dancers:* notably, a little girl dies in the course of the action, an event that might have led a less scrupulous writer to ring all the changes on Little Nell. But sentimentality is rigorously eschewed: the child dies silently and obscurely in a corner, and a long scene is played before her death is even noticed. When it is at last discovered, the consequent grief of her bereaved parents is less important than the psychological readjustments they are called upon to make in the light of their recognition of their share in the catastrophe. As a matter of fact, the author is so assiduous in avoiding sensationalism that he winds up being, to the great detriment of his drama, far more than necessarily restrained.

Mr. Wishengrad might be surprised by this judgment, for there is plenty of emotional turbulence in his play; but it is always being discussed and dissected and rarely revealed in action. Doesn't a puritanical wife, he might point out, strip herself to her shift and throw herself at the feet of her libertine husband? How much revelation do you want? But Mr. Wishengrad has made her so self-conscious about what she is doing that the action seems more a contrivance on the part of the author to illustrate a point than the impulse of a living, breathing, believable woman. "You are such an innocent in your sin, and I am such a whore in my virtue," she says at one point. The line is a good one, rhetorically effective and psychologically sound; but is it really Margaret Hyland talking or Morton Wishengrad speaking with her voice?

Since each reaction of the hapless Hyland family is held up for thoroughgoing inspection and analysis, the play tends to lose focus in a welter of details. It is hard to tell what it is really all about. A fairly simple plot-line runs through it: a mother is shamed by her child's deformity, which she connects with her husband's lust; a doctor persuades her that he can remove the blemish by a simple operation, and she allows him to do so; the operation is successful, but the child, quite inexplicably, dies. Symbolism seems to be at work here, recalling that of Hawthorne's story of the

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lady with the birthmark; but, if the point is that life is inconsistent with perfection, is it really illustrated by all the complex, love-hate relationships that Mr. Wishengrad is exploring, by which the bulk of our attention is absorbed? I rather think not, except perhaps in a most incidental sort of way. The prolixity of *The Rope Dancers* is just what one might expect in a first play by a mature, intelligent, and earnest author finally giving release to years of frustration as a television writer. It looks as if he felt that he would never write another play and that he had to put every idea in his head into this one. I certainly hope he will write many more plays with the same sincerity he has brought to *The Rope Dancers*, but with a less clinical attitude toward his characters and a more selective approach to the elements of his plots.

No playwright could ask for kinder treatment from his producers. The Playwrights Company's and Gilbert Miller's production is an especially fine one, with a subtle and sensitive performance by Siobhan McKenna as Mrs. Hyland, an ingratiating exhibition by Art Carney that his years as a TV comic have not dulled his competence as a serious actor, and a dignified impersonation of the understanding doctor by Theodore Bikel. Joan Blondell turns in a broader, more boisterous performance as a kindly neighbor. Her gusty presence brings relief to the grimmer dealings of the principals, but her mannered style does not really fit the play. As I watched her swagger about, hand on thrown-out hip, I saw a tavern wench from Congreve's chocolate house or maybe even the Boar's Head, and it occurred to me that she might, much to her surprise perhaps, find a congenial home one of these days in the classic theatre.

Another earnest new playwright, flashier and more facile than Morton Wishengrad, is John Osborne, represented locally by the London import, *Look Back in Anger*.[1] This is one of those very few first plays that seem destined to be mentioned in any future history of the English-speaking theatre. At any rate, it will be celebrated in future annals of the British stage, where it represents, not a mere flash-in-the-pan novelty, but the beginning of an already well established trend. Its newness shines less brightly on this side of the water, for we have passed through the years of the Group Theatre and Clifford Odets and have been on familiar terms for quite a while with the Actors' Studio and the likes of Michael Gazzo; but, for the English, *Look Back in Anger* marks a radical departure from the customary dramas of the drawing-room that hinted, with polite indirection, of life among the teacups but never came to grips with it. It is also what is particularly prevalent here but rare enough over there: a play about youth; and not youth aping its elders but youth striking out on its own.

Mr. Osborne has obviously drawn upon the American tradition of realistic theatre, but *Look Back in Anger* is still a distinctly English play with significant differences from its American counterparts. For one thing, its dialogue has far greater fluency than we are apt to find among

[1] A second play by Osborne, *The Entertainer*, has opened too late for inclusion in this review.

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our local products. We have come to expect from even the most ordinary English playwrights—as from English writers and speakers generally—a kind of rhetorical brilliance that, quite properly, puts all but the best of us to shame; here it is again, but this time with a new infusion of earthiness and vigor that is reportedly shocking Mr. Osborne's compatriots. It is noteworthy, however, that he has not yet at this point had to tackle the problem, which so many American writers have set for themselves, of how to render characters that are, by nature, relatively illiterate and incommunicative; even the least educated character in *Look Back in Anger* can easily manage a literary reference ("Proper little Marchbanks, you are"), and all of them have aptitude for vocal self-analysis that seems to come quite naturally to them in a way that it does not, for example, to Mr. Wishengrad's people.

It is, furthermore, more nearly typical of an English play that the emphasis be on character rather than plot and that the characters be revealed rather by speech than by action. *Look Back in Anger* is a talky play, and, though the talk—in its own special way—is some of the best in the theatre this side of Bernard Shaw, it can get pretty exasperating before the final curtain because it leads to no significant action. There is plenty of activity in the piece; people come and go, eat and iron clothes, scrap over the newspapers, slap one another, and clown about as naturally as you please. But action, in dramatic terms, is something else again. In the first act there is none of it; thereafter the machinery of the plot begins to turn, and I am rather afraid it creaks. Jimmy Porter is an angry young man and a trying fellow, to say the least; his much-put-upon wife leaves him, and her girl-friend becomes Jimmy's mistress; then Alison Porter returns, as the mistress goes; there are the bare bones of Mr. Osborne's story. The published version of the play is out[2], and I have referred to it in the vain hope of finding some more persuasive justification for these arrivals and departures than I could discover in the theatre. The question at this point is not why these people do what they do but why they do it *when* they do it; Mr. Osborne, so it seems, is so absorbed with recording their talk that he takes little pains to prepare their action, which suggests more of a pattern that he has superimposed upon his characters than something growing out of the reality he has created on the stage. I will not deny that people often act seemingly on impulse; but, while believability in life depends upon what does happen, believability on the stage depends upon what must happen. His failure to render inevitable action is Mr. Osborne's failure as an artist, which does not diminish his exceptional gifts as a reporter.

I hope that an appreciation for his reportorial detachment is the most that Mr. Osborne will claim from me, and that he will let me draw my own conclusions about the implications of his play. Jimmy Porter strikes me as being intolerably self-centered and self-pitying and disastrously immature; I cannot imagine anyone staying married to him who did not share his delusions or any marriage based upon those delusions amounting to anything more than an oppressive neurotic attach-

[2] Criterion Books. $2.75.

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ment. But I have a horrible suspicion that the author may think of his hero, for all his unattractive qualities, as an essentially noble spirit, whose pathetic situation is the result of living in an ignoble world. Jimmy Porter is a Romantic of sorts, and his spirit of rebellion against bourgeois morality and Philistine aesthetics has indeed informed the greatest monuments to man's advance from the cave; but, distorted, it is also the impulse that has led to the writing of a deal of bad poetry and to teen-agers murdering each other in Washington Heights.

The local production of *Look Back in Anger* is substantially the same as the London one, and it introduces us to the work of the English Stage Company and its director, Tony Richardson. This organization promises to beat our Actors' Studio at its own game; for its members have found a corrective to the polite and bloodless acting that we have come to associate with so many of their compatriots, while still making good use of that excellent technical training that is part of the equipment of even the most humdrum British player. Kenneth Haigh infuses Jimmy Porter's logorrhoea with commendable vitality and variety, and Alan Bates makes a charming foil as his sympathetic, but undeluded, friend. The girls, Mary Ure and Vivienne Drummond, are less impressive, but then Mr. Osborne has scarcely let them get a word in edgewise.

To turn *Look Homeward, Angel* into a completely satisfactory play would be to accomplish something little short of miraculous. Ketti Frings is by no means a miracle worker, yet her adaptation of Thomas Wolfe's sprawling novel comes close to being as good as we have any right to expect. We are told that Miss Frings spent a year writing the script and a good deal of time before that in its preparation, and the results approve her patience and her care; for hers is an example of honest and sober playwriting, and not the sort of hack work, whipped up in inconsiderate haste, that made such a mess of, say, *Compulsion.*

It must be a great temptation to any adaptor to fall upon whatever passages in a novel have in themselves a particularly theatrical flavor—a flashy character, perhaps, or a violent action—and force them into a play, regardless of whether they make a significant contribution to the main action or not. In one instance, I think Miss Frings has succumbed to this temptation, when she introduces the local whoremistress to dicker with Mr. Gant for a tombstone for one of her girls; it is a very funny scene and a touching one in its final implication, it helps to underline certain facets of W. O. Gant's character, and it focusses upon the marble angel that is a symbol of his frustrated aspirations; but still the scene seems to me to have but a peripheral relationship to the core of her play. I have fewer doubts, though some, about a later episode that shows the senior Gants breaking up the porch furniture; Miss Frings manages eventually to pull it into line, but I am not sure she does not relish it a little too much for its own sake before she does so. Finally, I must register my objection to the closing section of the play, the conversation between Eugene Gant and the ghost of his brother Ben: instead of summarizing the play (which

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would be unnecessary, for it speaks well enough for itself), it projects us into the future; but Miss Frings has already taken on as much weight as she can carry without having to take a look at *You Can't Go Home Again* as well. Despite these relatively minor lapses, this adaptor is clearly dedicated to the spirit of the novel as a whole, and her faithfulness to it is almost always impressive.

While keeping in mind the spirit of *Look Homeward, Angel*, Miss Frings has realized that her play must stand on its own feet without reference to its source. It is one thing to render a novel's separate dramatic moments effectively in terms of the stage; it is quite another to add these all up to a fully effective play. There is no question in my mind of Miss Fring's capacity to perform the first function: her handling of Ben's deathbed scene, that explodes into an appalling argument between the women who have come to comfort him, is an example of first-rate theatrical writing and by no means a solitary one. It is in the second respect that she runs into inevitable trouble, which she comes through with only partial—though perhaps under the circumstances, commendable—success. In a way, Wolfe has done her a service by being such a verbose and redundant writer; for much of what she has had to cut out of the book has proved to be dead wood rather than living timber. The play of *Look Homeward, Angel* actually gains something by being confined to a more coherent and disciplined form; but it loses something, too. The action has to be rushed too fast for the needs of the story, and the connecting links between the episodes are not always secure. Despite this, the main characters emerge with considerable dimension and vividness, especially Eliza and W. O. Gant. Ben is a little more obscure; and Laura James is not fully rounded enough to prevent her decision to leave Eugene from seeming rather too abrupt.

The big problem of this play is the delineation of Eugene Gant, and I am not sure whether my dissatisfaction with the role is attributable to Miss Frings or to Anthony Perkins, who plays it. There are, in effect, two Gene Gants: one is a shy, rather lazy, lanky, likeable boy, harassed by a materialistic, domineering, and singularly unperceptive mother; the other is a poet with a furious desire to break out of his narrow, parochial world and to experience—well, if it is possible—everything. The problems of the first are immediate, practical, and specific and thus lend themselves to illustration on the stage; those of the second are an extension of the first's into an area that is abstract, philosophical, and, for dramatic purposes, vague. The novelist, by analyzing his character's attitudes or by recording his thoughts, can easily explore this area, but the dramatist is limited to what can be revealed in speech, action, or reaction. In the case at hand, Miss Frings is stuck because there is nobody Gene Gant can unburden his heart to, except himself (and she wisely eschews the device of the extended soliloquy) and his brother Ben, who has problems enough of his own. As a result, the external, the social Gene Gant is given the weight of her attention; the internal-personal Gene Gant is allowed only occasionally to flash to the surface.

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As an actor, Anthony Perkins deals admirably with the first: his harried adolescent is executed with tenderness and grace and charm and a good deal of expertly realized humor. But he lacks the inner fire of Wolfe's protagonist. It is true that the playwright here has not given Mr. Perkins much to work on, but such opportunities as have been afforded him evidently involve histrionic problems that are presently beyond Mr. Perkins's scope. He does indeed cut loose when Eugene finally reaches the breaking point and tells his mother that he is going to leave; and, on the occasion that I saw the play, Mr. Perkins's fans were noisily impressed. I was impressed, too; but I feel that he has taken or been given the easiest way out of the scene, that is to say, through a long, steady *crescendo* that culminates in a predictable, but nonetheless effective, door-slamming exit.

I hope Anthony Perkins is taking acting lessons from Jo Van Fleet, who plays Eliza Gant; he might particularly notice how this greatly gifted actress manages her big aria that follows his; how she can paint a whole rainbow of feelings with one banal remark; how she can pause and hold an audience's attention, one might think, forever; how she can turn away in laughter and turn back in tears; how, in short, she can exploit every available technical device, creating unimaginable variety without ever sacrificing the integrity of her characterization to mere virtuosity.

The general level of the other performances is very satisfying, if none are as exciting as Miss Van Fleet's. And Jo Mielziner has found some deceptively simple solutions for some highly complex space problems; his settings for *Look Homeward, Angel* are tasteful and good to look at, and, most important, they are built to be acted upon.

The Dark at the Top of the Stairs is not, certain reviewers to the contrary notwithstanding, William Inge's best play; I trust that that one has not been written yet. I do not think it is even his best so far, but it is a play whose deficiencies are incidental to its virtues and one that no playwright should feel ashamed of having written. Like *Bus Stop*, this play brings together a group of people—here the members of a family and their friends—all of whose stories illustrate a central theme, in this case that everyone harbors his own private terror, and point to some sort of a solution, here that mutual respect and understanding will help us to face that dark at the top of the stairs. But it has not the structural integration of *Bus Stop* where the elements of the several plots are artfully interwoven so that the developments, climaxes, and denouements of each coincide, each reinforcing the other; in *Dark* (I hate these abbreviations, but what is one going to do?), the separate stories are considered consecutively, with the result that we have a series of climaxes popping off all through the play, each diminishing the one that follows it and turning it into something of an anti-climax. This is particularly unfortunate with *Dark*, which has (as the earlier play has not) a clearly indicated central character in Cora Flood; it is the accumulated revelations of the other characters that lead her to her own self-knowledge, but this last, most

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crucial revelation becomes, in the nature of things, the least interesting of the lot. What is more, Mr. Inge has chosen to show us Cora and Rubin Flood together only at the beginning and the end of the evening, so that the critical problem of their marriage includes the whole play as though in parentheses; the trouble is that, by the time we reach the last bracket, we have somewhat lost touch with the first.

Another defect derives from Mr. Inge's choice of form on this occasion: what we are given here is a series of confessions or reports, but not dramatic actions. For example, we see Lottie Lacey as a garrulous and bawdy wife: we are only told (in a speech, it must be allowed, of agonizing self-revelation) that she is a frigid spinster at heart; we see Sammy Goldenbaum as a likeable boy with a talent for putting people at their ease: we learn only through the report of his suicide how delicate were his defenses as a lonely Jew in a predominantly gentile community; we are shown Rubin Flood as a hard-headed, somewhat callous salesman: we know only when he tells us that he is utterly bewildered by the demands of modern commercialism. The point is not that these oppositions do not ring true; they are observed with telling accuracy, but we should like to be able to discover them more for ourselves.

No recent playwright has suffered more in production than William Inge has in the past. Apparently the essentially quiet tone of his plays has scared timid directors into souping them up to please the customers; Joshua Logan (as might have been expected) did that with *Picnic*, and Harold Clurman (as no one should have expected) did it with *Bus Stop*. Or, since his generally sound theatrical sense betrays him sometimes into sentimentality, less tasteful or less perceptive directors have been tempted, perhaps, to emphasize this quality rather than suppress it. At any rate, Mr. Inge has at last found the director he deserves. Elia Kazan has met him on his own terms and happily has brought nothing to this play from his association with Tennessee Williams. He has directed it without frills, simply, tastefully, and with dignity; the results are very gratifying.

The cast on the whole is excellent. Eileen Heckart is an actress of the same class as, though somewhat more limited than, Jo Van Fleet; Frank Overton, Timmy Everett, and Evans Evans make equally fine contributions—all the more remarkable in view of the youth of the last two. I am a good deal less than satisfied, however, with the performances of Teresa Wright and Pat Hingle. Mr. Hingle seems to me, for one thing, just a shade too young for Rubin Flood; a more important objection (and a strange one to have to make in the case of a Studio actor) is that he seems to exhaust his energies in playing the externals of the part—the walk, the accent, and so on—leaving little for the realization of its essentials. Mr. Inge does not give him the best of opportunities to develop his character; nor does he serve Miss Wright particularly well, for Cora Flood has to spend more time in reacting to other, more colorful characters than in displaying her own. It may not be altogether Miss Wright's fault, then, that I found her performance pretty monotonous.

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VERNON YOUNG

International Film Scene: Asia, Italy and Mexico

"It is our differences that unite us, because we approach each other in order to study them, and because in studying them we discover our resemblances." --Elie Faure

LIKE THE CRYSTAL NOTE of a temple bell sounding over the hubbub of a native bazaar, *Pather Panchali* (*The Little Road*), a film of contemporary Bengal village life, has emerged from the fantastic melange of operetta, melodrama and anachronistic legend which normally characterizes the movie production of India. A young Bengali girl and her small brother—incarnations, both, of sculptures from an 8th-century grotto—seeing their first railway train and listening to the *sostenuto* of telegraph wires threading the spaces above the paddy-fields and bamboo groves; white bullocks drifting through plumed grasses; the surface of a lotus pond prismatic with dragon-flies or darkened by ferocious diagonals of rain; the outcry of a bereaved mother suddenly cut off and then resumed, as if in mercy, by the plaint of an unearthly flute: these and other images inveigle us into that most difficult of simulations, the pretense of having shared place and time with a handful of people (in this case an indigent Brahmin family) whose rhythm, customs and social destiny are alien to ours. But this is a lovely illusion which doesn't stand the test of months. We are not subjugated by Satyajit Ray's film, as we were by Mizoguchi's *Ugetsu* or, in a less personal way, by Basil Wright's *Song of Ceylon*. *Pather Panchali* is a sensitive film, beautifully photographed, indigenously composed; yet it is a film of moments never satisfyingly fused. These moments are given temporal continuity by reference to the changes of season, two deaths in the family and the final departure of the survivors for Benares. What is missing from the film as a whole is an aesthetic principle, intuitively developed from the native source. Ray has chosen to ignore the traditional sinuosity and inter-dissolving identities of Indian art which even Renoir captured in *The River* (whenever he was able to cut loose from the static sequences of the priggish novel he was adapting). Perhaps these would not have been to the point of Ray's particular intention, but something of the kind was demanded, and perhaps all I'm really saying is that Ray was animated by love but had no point of view. He has admitted that he wasn't afraid of the picture rambling because life in a Bengali village rambles. But the director-artist, while he is making a film, is God: he musn't *permit* life to ramble! I suspect that Ray's caution, assuming it doesn't derive from inexperience, may be due to his conscious attempt to stand outside his material, in the manner of Western sociology.

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He believes himself to be influenced by De Sica. Like De Sica, he does have a special gift for finding poetry in stillness and for coaxing the lyrical from the everyday—"that light of glamor created in the shock of trifles." Unlike De Sica, and more like Flaherty, he is afraid of imposing on his material. Neo-realism, in the hands of De Sica and Fellini, is more than verisimilitude, and Ray is not the first to misunderstand it. However, this *is* a first film and as such has introduced to the West a film creator of more than ordinary promise whom we should watch with some eagerness.

Mexican films have been shown in the United States for years, usually without English subtitles, in Spanish neighborhood theatres, with the result that any familiarity with them has been limited to the work of Luis Bunuel, a Spanish surrealist (now working in Paris, as he did originally). An enterprising producer, Ponces by name, is probing the gringo market with films that speak uncompromisingly for the native Mexican and more especially for the Indian. Not since Sergei Eisenstein's ill-fated incomplete epic has the monumental, bristling landscape of Mexico been photographed with such impact as in the four-part film, *Raices* (*The Roots*); never has the quiescent pride of the submerged Indio been so intensely focalized—embarrassingly so in the first two stories, where an unquestionably driving resentment insults one's intelligence by over-statement. But the edge of this same sincerity is sharpened like the blade of a machete in the sardonic fable, *One-Eyed*, wherein a boy named Angel, tormented for his affliction by his playmates, is dragged by his mother on a desperate pilgrimage to a religious festival where, she is convinced, his sight will be restored. No touch more clearly differentiates *Raices* from that other morality-film of a small boy's faith, *Marcelino, Pan y Vino* (the Hungarian-directed film from Spain—the Spain of Murillo, not Goya!—shown here last year), than the nature of the 'miracle' which ensues . . . *The Filly*, final story of the four, engrosses a subject of equally concentrated power: the struggle, as silent for the most part as it is deadly, between an Indian servant girl of slim, pristine beauty and her would-be seducer, an aging Spanish archaeologist, pathetically obtuse and headstrong as a burro. I have noted few film scenes more relentless in their intimacy than one in which, against a black-clouded latitude of ocean, the man knocks the girl unconscious by the waves' edge: as she lies, limply graceful on the wet sand, he first arranges her long disordered hair into a tidy undulation, then proceeds to kiss the length of her body, beginning at the feet, the camera unmercifully within an inch of his head all the way! An assertive Mayan pyramid, around and upon which the camera also builds vivid tensions, finally comes to symbolize, with no forced effort from the director, the spirit of a rooted people who have endured and may yet triumph.

Probably the Italians don't half appreciate how kind God is; He has given them De Sica *and* Fellini—De Sica, open, measured, at ease and

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deceptively informal—Fellini, raffish and oblique, a revolutionary wit whose moral pity sears as it enlightens, while he enlists madness and the saints in his cause. *Oro di Napoli* (*Gold of Naples*) is a composite film from which one of the five stories was removed before it left Italy, presumably because the Italian government wanted rich Americans (for rich Americans read Americans) not to accept with too great alacrity the slogan, *Vedi Napoli e mori*. What remains is still a dazzling example of De Sica's versatility and of his mastery of the tragi-comic vein. In two of the four instances he took unusual risks by employing situations in which the climax is an interior revelation; if nothing else the weight of the burden is then placed squarely on the actor. This is true of the story where the gangster who has held a quaking petit-bourgeois family under his thumb is suddenly made to reckon with their timorous but resolved unanimity to oust him. Since they are actually as harmless as they ever were, physically, their concerted moral reprise must appear sufficient to break his command of himself and over them. That it does so is a tribute to a great cinematic spirit, not the least of whose achievements has been the restoration of acting to a fully complementary role in the motion picture, without at the same time sacrificing cinematics to theatre or to tedious transcripts of anecodote not even theatre, characteristic of Marcel Pagnol and of too many British directors. De Sica, himself, is a featured actor in this film, generously sharing his big scene with one of those small phenomenal boys who seem to exist in Italy and France for no other purpose than to be discovered by the likes of De Sica.

But the masterpiece of *Oro di Napoli* is, in my opinion, the closing episode—an entity which should be preserved on supernitrate film for containing one of the memorable sequences of movie pantomime—dealing with the surprise offer of marriage by a respectable and wealthy man to a well-bred prostitute, played by Silvana Mangano. Accepting the proposal with mingled happiness, mistrust and fear, the girl discovers she is being used solely to support the man's sado-masochistic guilt. The long moment when, having left the man's house indignantly, she hesitates, shivering and torn between two worlds (her own and the partly-beguiling alternative) on the lamplit solitary street, is another victory of De Sica's confident genius for trusting the inwardly provoked imagination of his actors, with a minimum of shots exterior to their responsibility for *projecting* the emotion. The eloquence of this moment was certainly not supplied by De Sica alone; there is abundant preceding evidence in this vignette of Mangano's resources, which up to now have been generally supposed to exist entirely below her waist! My own infatuation has always been more presumptive; I'm satisfied that my contentions, in the face of austerely raised eyebrows, have been vindicated. With opportunities available for responding to actresses who express the very core of feeling, it seems to take a mass neurosis for public appreciation to coincide with a deserving object. Silvana Mangano will never be the universal emblem that Garbo was, yet in this film her expressiveness is of that order—the great silent order; observe her introductory scene at

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the cafe table: with what nerve-end finesse she expostulates or questions with one free hand—and I know of nothing more wonderful in the context of today's film, in so far as our subject is personality, than the exact moment at which the Mangano face begins to break, either with pain or joy. In fact, confronted with Italian films of this kind, one is reminded of how rarely one sees today that most miraculous conformation in nature—the human face.

Federico Fellini's *Il Bidone* (*The Swindler*) has Giulietta Masina to compound the exceptions but she is regrettably in the subordinated part of a loyal wife to one of the trinity whose petty but hellbent larceny comprises the subject matter of this strange, tough-textured film. Space does not permit me to suggest the extensions in *Il Bidone* of the Fellini-Penelli-Flaiano metaphysic. Suffice it for summary that although on a single viewing I would not rate the film equal to *La Strada* in human and evocative appeal, it does show Fellini at his cinematic best, its moral urgency is (dangerously) more explicit than heretofore, its resumé of the struggle for status within criminal elites is a withering social accusation—ultimately allegorical, of course—its substantive details of contemporary Italian society are fresh and syncopated, and it is quietly dominated from beginning to ambiguous end by a marvellous dry-mouthed, utterly sad performance from Broderick Crawford, playing a lonely swindler with such majestic fatigue as to suggest an experience-laden derelict painted by Rembrandt.

During one pellucid interval of Keigo Kimura's *Senhime* (*Princess Sen*)—an interval that follows a fading tableau of red and gold where assassination has been diverted by welcomed seduction (a reverse climax to that of *Gate of Hell*)—in this refulgent hush of daylight, the Princess (Machiko Kyo), flanked by a tulip tree and attendants dressed in fuchsia, inquires artlessly, "Was the world ever so beautiful?" And only a spectator of swinish constraint will fail to murmur, "*Never!*" It is barely open to doubt that no decorative world within the confines of a single motion picture was ever so beautiful, and I declare this mindful of Murnau's *Faust*, Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast* and those other nominations from the Japanese, *Gate of Hell* and *Yang Kwei-Fei*. The latter no more than prepared us for the infinities of delicate color orchestration which compose the eventful progression of this feudal, fantastic (if historically grounded) chronicle. Pragmatists, struggling mothwise to evade the splendor of Japanese samurai-films, have been heard to broach the supposedly confounding question: "Can you identify yourself?" A swallowed answer turneth away wrath... Identify with whom—with what? With Machiko Kyo's Princess, a frozen figurine of green and lavender in the moonlight aftermath of a killing or poised, ivory-still, in the tremulant immobility of mourning, like a Kwan-Yin freshly moulded? Identify with a frustrated abductor deserted by his followers, frantically alone, impaling himself on a spear within a cool frame of trees and oyster-white wall?—or with chromatic shifts from jubilant red-and-white dancers to the menace of

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gunmetal blue-and-grey guards at an ominous blossom party which ends in slaughter?

If the demand for 'identification' has areas of pertinence (and means more than a failure of imagination on the part of the demander), this film is not of them, any more than a performance of Kabuki or even a Western ballet. We surely know that identification (i. e. participation) can take place at a deeper level of empathy than that of topical recognition. The order of experience represented by Japanese 'period' films is widely misunderstood in a way that ballet isn't because the cry persists for film art to be exclusively a narrative, newsy art, within reach, and never an art of form. Our public will consume domestic travesties of history where no effort is required of its imagination, since no distance has been established, and it may patronize two or three Japanese films out of curiosity. By and large, however, judging from the poor reception given *Senhime* in Europe, the honeymoon with Japan seems to be approaching the end. Commercial distributors, of necessity open-eyed to what goes on in the movie houses of the capitals, view with caution the launching of another rearrangement of elements which have made up *Ugetsu* or *Gate of Hell*.[1]

Admittedly there's a thin line, where treatment is everything, between the archetype of romance or myth—*Arabian Nights*, *Tristram and Yseult*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Don Giovanni*—and one of its myriad standardized echoes—the paintings of Salvator Rosa, *The Three Musketeers*, *Madame Butterfly*, a Western, *The Thief of Baghdad*. "Popular art is simply the fixation and perpetuation of moods and means originally expressive, which have lost their former peculiar significance and turned into stereotyped and merely symbolic expressions" (Carlo Levi—*Of Fear and Freedom*). At the Museum of Modern Art, during Japanese Film Week early in 1957, it was evident to anyone who had retained contrary illusions that the sweep and violence, as well as the almost lapidary surface, of the finer Japanese product, is mocked by its lower forms, and that a third-rate film from Japan, whatever travelogue assets it may incidentally boast, is a third-rate film, that's all. *Nozo No Yureisen*, to name one among the offerings of The Dismal Week, belongs to a cycle of stories exploiting the master swordsman, Saotome, also known as the Bored Hatamoto; and there we are again, in what we know as the Fairbanks world. Yet the basic historic material supplying the intrigue of *Senhime* and the ethos of *Samurai* (formerly *Musashi*) is the same in kind. The Western sophisticate alerts his conscience against frivolity when he suspects its presence in imported films; while discussing as tolerable the *kitsch* of a *Henry VIII* or a *High Noon*, he has been quick to disclaim *Samurai* as little better than a Western, principally in the faulty belief that the swordplay therein is

[1]The prospect may be temporarily improved by the bestowal of the Venice Film Festival Grand Prize on Kurasawa's *The Throne of Blood*—i.e. *Macbeth*, in a Japanese medieval setting. September, 1957.

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inconceivable![2] An ironic circumstance, for this film is part of a trilogy, which nobody bothered to discover when complaining of its inconclusiveness—its subject, the spiritual disciplining of a warrior.

Devotees who have willingly paid a half-dozen admissions now expect the Japanese, without peril and tomorrow, to upset the equilibrium between their thinking and their milieu, which has prescribed the style and matter of their art for centuries. Their twentieth-century theatre is negligible, by report, and their current-problem films are far from even Elia Kazan. To the Japanese, this is a genuine crisis, and more than their world film market is at stake. In two issues of *The Reporter* last year, Mark Schorer discussed the conflict in the Japanese psyche as he found it mirrored in some recent novels and in a group of nihilistic contemporary-subject films which will no doubt never reach here. What Schorer found missing in both the fiction and the films was "a central psychic control of a kind to which western fiction, even cheap popular fiction and even our fiction of despair, has habituated us." I agree with Mr. Schorer that in the Japanese literature I've read—by no means abundant—and in the contemporary 'problem' films I've seen (a slightly larger number) there is scarcely any assumption of the mind's ability to shape action which might change one's personal destiny, or for that matter the immediate prospect; throughout there is a fatalistic self-surrender to a closed cycle of the character.[3] But this is not surprising. The samurai-films, at the level of *Senhime* or *Chushingura* (a superb film I'd love to expatiate on but there's small chance of your exhibitors procuring a 4½-hour film), have pictorialized the basic pattern: the warrior state, with its sacrifices and spartan scapegoats, its tribal revenges and set precedents, its ritualistic interdictions and self-mutilation and, in the Japanese case conspicuously, the primarily sexual alternation of self-denial and orgiastic release. As social anthropology, quite as much as exquisite cinema, Japanese period films are instructive. To the question, "Why should we be interested in the past?", Erwin Panofsky has replied, "Because we are interested in reality." The reality 'status' of feudalism is visible in most of the modern-situated films—containment and cold violence, stiff pride and concern with retribution or renunciation—without the ritualism or the cinematic iridescence to glorify it. (Cf. the meretricious *Golden Demon*, *Undercurrent*, *Wheat Whistle* and the Isihara films described by Schorer.) Where the pattern is least discernible, little remains but bare melodrama, family-sentiment and a puerile aping of tame Western formulas (cf. *Okasan*, *24 Eyes*, *Bliss on Earth*, *Street of Shame*). Toyoda's *Wheat Whistle*, a compara-

[2]The comedy gathers. Actually Kurasawa has stated that with *his* samurai-film (*The Magnificent Seven*) he *did* propose to outdo the Westerns! But that's not all he proposed, whatever he achieved or failed to achieve. Cf. "Love, Death and the Foreign Film". V. Y., *The Hudson Review*, X (Spring 1957), pp. 103-110.

[3]Brilliantly exposed by Akutagawa, the young suicide who also wrote *Rashomon*, in one version of *Gate of Hell—not* the version filmed for the international market! Cf. Donald Keene's *Modern Japanese Literature*, Grove Press, N. Y. 1956.

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tively attractive film, concentrates, with none of the psychological shadings of, for example, *Devil in the Flesh* or *Torment*, on a painful adolescent triangle. The hero, young son of a Buddhist abbot, *cannot* bring himself to express love; his ordeal of suppression is an unsatisfactory film experience chiefly because you're never quite sure to what extent the writer understands the sources of the boy's predicament. All but one of the modern films I've seen, in the popular category or not, convey a diffidence next door to frigidity (when characters aren't screaming their heads off) if any intimate exchange—not amorous, necessarily—is called for (especially noticeable in *Tower of Lilies*, the last-days-on-Okinawa film). Poor naturalistic acting is partly responsible; to be contemporary is evidently to be American, with an alien personality. No, the Japanese actor *has* to be disguised: he *needs* the mask or the samurai sword, and the costume that stylizes him. And the actors symbolize the Japanese at large—invaded by two worlds, the one chimerical, yet in their blood, the other a rational wish, inaccessible to the temperament.

Harp of Burma, an etude mistakenly constructed as a didactic symphony, is the single Japanese movie I've seen that expressed a possible mode for their reserving poetic perception within crucially modern content. The harpist of a Japanese army unit (a bugler in our terms?) is left behind, all but buried alive under a British barrage, during the retreat from Burma. Digging himself out, he commences a staggering trek to catch up with his men, witnessing for the first time, on his death-strewn journey, the full and widespread enormity of Japan's defeat. The shock is decisive: he determines not to rejoin his company but to stay in Burma and bury the Japanese dead. Forty-five minutes of it has the substance of a lyric: thereafter it explains and reiterates itself away... Yet not altogether. A compound image at the film's climax, matching anything of its kind since Dovzhenko's hour, registers indelibly the crossroads of Japanese anguish. The harpist is wearily trudging the wide mud bank of a sluggish river when high on the beach and slightly ahead of him he sees a huge rotting pile of Japanese bodies, a heap of skulls and fragmented carcasses. Covering his face with his hands he runs, sobbing, past the hideous sight, the camera swinging river-ward behind him. And into the expanding view, rhythmic, unhurried and invincibly alive, untouched by the wake of carnage, come gliding boatfuls of Burmese natives—and some strolling, but erect, along the river's margin under the vast sky.

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Reviews

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

They're Dead But They Won't Lie Down[1]

EVERYBODY KNOWS, of course, that the novel is dead. T. S. Eliot, whose nose for the moribund is second to none, suspected as much when he wrote in an article on that *thing*, *Ulysses:* "The novel ended with Flaubert and James." (This was in 1923. Proust had died the year before and Kafka was to die the year afterwards, neither with his work completed; and between 1922 and 1925 the following *things* were published: *Babbitt*, *Precious Bane*, *Antic Hay*, *The Magic Mountain*, *A Passage to India*, *An American Tragedy*, *The Great Gatsby*.) Over the years since then Eliot has plugged for a good many *thing*-writers: Djuna Barnes, Wyndham Lewis, Charles Williams, Georges Simenon . . . Not the cream of the crop, I'd say; but fiction has never been Eliot's strong point, nor, as a critic, is he best at destruction. However, demolition and doom-saying have been a specialty of our century; but whereas such men as Spengler meant it, by now it can be pure chic. Valéry, for example, said that if poetry had not already existed we should never have invented it for ourselves; and in the January 1958 *London Magazine* you may find John Wain serving up a warmed over, almost charming version of the same appalling doubt. Among us now, considerable reputations have been made by zealous and wanton destroyers whose aim is not primarily satire (though what their aim is, other than making you sorry you are alive and literate, I am not sure); *Partisan Review* has nurtured a good many of them; Mary McCarthy and Leslie Fiedler are the shiniest of the kind, and not many contend with Anthony West for the title of most disagreeably wrong; they rejoice, if you can call it rejoicing, with hatchets. Fiction, since it has for a long time been the socially dominant literary form, has come in for more than its portion of the hatchetry. John Brooks, in his essay in *The Living Novel*, describes a macabre séance (attended, I must say, by some novelists mighty only in their pusillanimity):

[1] THE LIVING NOVEL, edited by *Granville Hicks*. Macmillan. $4.50. HOW TO READ A NOVEL, by *Caroline Gordon*. Viking. $3.50. THE AMERICAN NOVEL AND ITS TRADITION, by *Richard Chase*. Doubleday, Anchor Books. $.95. A DEATH IN THE FAMILY, by *James Agee*. McDowell, Obolensky. $3.95. THE CONFESSION, by *Mario Soldati*.. Knopf. $3.00. BEFORE NOON, by *Ramon J. Sender*. University of New Mexico Press. $6.50. KOKORO, by *Natsume Soseki*. Regnery. $3.95. FIRES ON THE PLAIN, by *Shohei Ooka*. Knopf. $3.50. THE MAKIOKA SISTERS, by *Junichiro Tanizaki*. Knopf. $4.95. THE CASTLE OF FRATTA, by *Ippolito Nievo*. Houghton Mifflin. $5.50.

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> A couple of winters ago in New York, I remember sitting through a weird session of literary murder-and-suicide, in which a man whose chief occupation is criticizing fiction announced to a group of practicing novelists, without qualification or apology, that the novel is already dead, beyond any hope of resuscitation by science, art, or prayer. Most everybody there nodded gravely.

Indeed, it is one of the nuisances of the age that these little ones use and use again waste products staled by their betters a generation since.

In *The Living Novel*, Granville Hicks has collected an essay apiece by ten producing novelists; in his afterword he explains that his purpose was to combat, with argument and example, "The Enemies of the Novel." Three of the ten essays are worth reading, those by Saul Bellow, Herbert Gold, and Flannery O'Connor, and five others are worth dipping into, those by John Brooks, Ralph Ellison, Wright Morris, Harvey Swados, and Jessamyn West. None of these latter five has taken as seriously as he might the writing of his essay as an essay, a delinquency not uncommon in current literary discourse; the result has been a distressing amount of bad writing—easy spouting off, sloppiness of syntax, flat-footed generalizing. All of them have done better, in their fiction at least. Such defects are particularly annoying since the novel is in need of defense against its enemies both internal and external and also in need of being "sold" to the indifferent, distracted public. This book provides some good counter-offensive, and some fair persuasion. But what it offers that is most worth having is assertion about non-technical aspects of the novel, that which fiction shares with and catches of life. Here are three such passages. Gold: "I suggest that the contemporary American novel is still the best place to look for instances of lives which seek to be whole and unafraid." O'Connor: "In the greatest fiction, the writer's moral sense coincides with his dramatic sense, and I see no way for it to do this unless his moral judgment is part of the very act of seeing, and he is free to use it." Bellow: "The writer asks himself, 'Why shall I write this next thing?' It is still possible, despite all theories to the contrary, to answer, 'Because it *is necessary*.' A book, any book, may easily be superfluous. But to manifest love—can that be superfluous? Is there so much of it about us? Not so much. It is still rare, still wonderful. It is still effective against distraction."

A critic must be helpless before his experience of the work of literature. Once he has *known* the excellence of a book, he must allow no one to talk him out of it. To a very Aristotle, he says: "No doubt your argument is perfect, and quite possibly you are right, for I am not perfect. *But this is what I know*." Against all theories, both those tested by millenia and also those which he has made up himself, his experience must stand firm; for it is all he has to go on at last. Otherwise he becomes an esthetician, one who stirs a stew of his own concocting. An esthetician has his uses, to be sure, not the least of which is to facilitate discourse by providing categories. However, despite the fact that esthetician-critics have moved in

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on fiction in the past generation, discourse is still murky; and if the James-Lubbock-Gordon school of criticism retains its ascendency, the novel itself will suffer. A chief trouble, as I see it, is that many people don't know what they mean when they use the word "novel".

Caroline Gordon, for example, in *How to Read a Novel*, thinks that there is only one sort of novel and uses the word to point at that sort, the one at which Henry James was the best. (She should have read Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*, at least that section of it which differentiates and names four main sorts of long prose fiction.) In her book Miss Gordon does not mention Cervantes, Hardy, or Gogol; Dickens she puts in his place by saying he strings beads "on a loose thread of narration", though she does say his beads are pretty. And she speaks of James's change in novel technique, after his failure as a playwright, with the tones of a cultist speaking of The Master's crucial revelation. Two or three times in the course of her book, she grieves that The Master "did not have a single discerning reader in his lifetime" (if only Conrad, I thought irreverently, had been able to take a course in James-reading from Percy Lubbock!), but she gets nourishment from thinking that he "now has the kind of reading every writer longs for; not only are his works widely distributed but for the past fifteen or twenty years some of the finest critical minds on both sides of the Atlantic (but more particularly on this side) have devoted their best efforts to their explication." If you agree that Gide is a "failure as a novelist" (196); that a 231-page book on the novel can afford to offer a 23-page summary of *Oedipus Rex;* that R. P. Warren is "a more accomplished technician than Mr. (E. M.) Forster and a more responsible critic" (81); that "Henry James was after bigger—and higher-flying—game than" Swift was (163): then *How to Read a Novel* is just the book for you.

Certain facts of life need to be reasserted. James was indeed formally a master of one sort of novel, but he has his peers among writers of fiction, Balzac, Stendhal, Austen, Dickens, Mann, though your list won't be mine, and in heaven's name there is a royalty above them all, Tolstoy and Dostoievsky. "The novel ended with Flaubert and James": the damaged truth in this saying is, one kind of novel reached its formal limits with those two men. The two Russians were technically imperfect; and they were not writing the Jamesian type of novel (nor any other set type, for that matter, but blends of types). Theory cracks on them; if theory cannot account for their greatness, so much the worse for theory. One's interest in their work is not primarily in their formal pioneering (that is, their breaking old laws of fiction and making new ones) but in those aspects of the novel emphasized by the essayists in *The Living Novel*: "the mystery of personality," moral vision, what it was like to live in such a place at such a time, guilt, love. It is embarrassing for a critic or a teacher, or any literate person talking about excellent books, ever to reach the point of having to flap his arms helplessly and say, "But this is what happened to me when I read the book." Yet he must be able to do it. And though it may be embarrassing, at least it is not pernicious.

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It is a pleasure to recommend *The American Novel and Its Tradition* to anyone at all interested in the subject; for not only does Chase propose a basically sound and illuminating thesis, but also he writes with vigor. Not that his style is polished or meticulous; but the intensity with which he cares about his opinions and about making you understand them gives his prose an energy which, in a way not common in critical writing, catches you up and carries you on. Though he spends more time bowing to other critics than is useful, he is afraid of none of them, not even James, and is willing to state his opinions with confidence, forthrightly.

> One does not destroy either Norris or Dreiser by pointing out their bad grammar and their false rhetoric. On the other hand neither can you write a very great novel unless you are master of your language, as Hawthorne, Melville, Mark Twain, James, and Faulkner are masters. And then again you may be the perfect master of your language without being a great master of the art of the novel; Hemingway is an example.

What he says here is true and should be heeded by anyone tempted to treat style as necessarily a prime element in fiction. But this passage also embodies a fault of Chase's writing which finally bothered me as I read the book: over-insistence. "A very great novel" is too strong by far for the work of most of the five he lists, and furthermore it implies that Norris wrote novels to which great can be applied at all—as though one were to speak seriously of Mickey Spillane's best novel, best is the superlative of good. Chase is quite justified in spending a chapter on Norris, and he carefully diagnoses his faults; but when I come upon sentences like this one, "it is in Norris that we see the glories and perils of naturalism in their sheerest form," I want to tell Chase *Relax*. There is one other fault which is seriously troublesome in the book, his myth-jargon. "The language of *Huckleberry Finn* is a kind of joyous exorcism of traditional literary English, but this ritual act allies it irrevocably with what it exorcises." The language is an exorcism—that I can just take, though I am not much the wiser for it; but when this very tenuous exorcism is pinned down as ritual act, I balk. Chase specifically disavows, in an appendix, the myth critics and for the right reasons; but he is more contaminated by the fashion than he realizes. In the above sentence, the meager truth contained in it is considerably less important than the chic of pointing by the way to ritual act where you don't expect to find it (and where, as a matter of fact, it isn't). Still, he has enough tact not to found his main arguments on such queasy material, so that the effect on the reader is finally no graver than annoyance; and occasionally, as in his discussion of *Moby Dick*, the use of myth-criticism is pertinent and just.

Both these shortcomings are a good man's bad habits. For when he is dealing with his main theme he neither over-insists nor allows his thesis to distort his taste; on the contrary, he treats each book and writer with respect and he uses such arm-flapping words as unforgettable and memorable when speaking of a novel's characters. And when he uses the word

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Manichaean in his discussion of one main element in American fiction, he does so with tact; to be sure, he does not define or discuss the term much, and he associates it with Puritan Calvinism rather too easily, but he intends it to be no more than suggestive and illuminating, as in fact it is. His main thesis, to which he does real justice and which is the best way of considering American fiction that I have come across,[2] is this: the circumstances of American life have been such as to encourage the romance and the romance-novel rather than the purer novel of the British tradition; this means that American fiction tends away from the novel of manners towards either a nostalgic pastoral idyl, or, more importantly, towards melodrama, extreme characters which are more figures than personalities, symbolism and allegory, violent actions, and poetic language. Descriptively, this is inarguable; and, like any really good description, the more elaborately and subtly it is worked out, the more instructive it becomes. And finally, since fiction is inextricably involved with life, it is not just a greater understanding of the American novel that Chase provides but also of America—a subject wisely come at tangentially.

The book *A Death in the Family* contains 339 pages, of which some 73 are various fragments which Agee had not yet integrated into the story but which have been interspersed here and there by the publisher. Mostly these are mood pieces, nostalgia for the Nashville of the author's childhood, schmaltz, a hindrance to the novel, though one fragment, a Faulknneresque visit to a very antique Granmaw up in the hills, is good in itself because something happens in it. The novel proper is a meticulous and delicate reporting of a single episode in the life of an ordinary white middle-class family in Nashville in 1915. The father is called to another town to the bedside of his sick father; returning home, he is killed in an automobile accident caused purely by a mechanical failure in his car; his wife and her family arrange a funeral which is exceptional only in that the wife, a Catholic though her husband was a non-believer, has a priest conduct the service; and everyone in the book who is able, including his two children, attend the services. They are all decent and respectable people, with the limitations these adjectives imply; they conceive of themselves and their relations with one another conventionally; they do nothing surprising, out of character, in serious violation of the conventions of their time and place. Furthermore, the only important conflict in the book is the religious conflict between the wife and her aunt on the one hand and the husband and the men of the wife's family on the other; yet not even this conflict matures into anything much more formidable than grumbles and sudden silences.[3] Some thematic complexity is provided by

[2] A recent example of how tedious the conventional approach to a nation's fiction can be may be found in *The English Novel* by Walter Allen (Everyman).

[3] Agee insists that the mother and her aunt were Catholic and uses the word as I have just done; among us here and now, such a usage indicates Roman Catholic; and yet Father Jackson behaves like an Anglo-Catholic and the mother has the children recite the Lord's Prayer with the Protestant ending. This is the only obscurity in the book, and seems pure carelessness of some sort.

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having the events happen around the small children, especially the son, who are involved and half-involved in troubles they only confusedly understand.

No plot, ordinary characters in an ordinary world, very little theme —only extraordinary handling by the author could justify such paucity of substance. And Agee's handling is extraordinary, not in any technical way so much as humanly: he treats the characters with an affectionate respect and meticulous exactness which are admirable. This, the reader feels, is exactly how actual people would have behaved in such a circumstance, down to the finest detail. Once in a while there is some auctorial poeticizing, but most of the time we see by means of the best kind of reportorial prose; and Agee's ear for ordinary speech and eye for details are as reliable as his attitude towards his characters is respectful and loving. Yet, by giving us far too much of this good but essentially simple thing, he pushes the novel into sentimentality. Pathos unrelieved by fear, humor, malice, or wit, but on the contrary added to by nostalgia and dollops of schmaltz—a little of this goes a long way. Dickens usually kept it down to a chapter or two in a sixty-chapter book; Agee is less moderate. Some of my tears were jerked.

Mario Soldati's short novel *The Confession* aspires to be a small masterpiece, but, unfortunately, does not make it. The plot embodies the theme of the book with a congruence that can only excite admiration; the characters, all of them, are realized with fullness and are left undamaged by the author despite his clear approval of the attitudes and beliefs of some and disapproval of those of others; the prose is lucid, economical, and tactful. Yet these excellences are spoiled by the book's tone. For example, at a crucial moment in the book and in the life of the protagonist, when he is making his confession, the author feels free to intrude an aside upon us, and an aside which itself points at the too easy, too rational manner with which he exposes intimate and serious matters.

> During these few instants, as these reflections came to him—it is true much less clearly than this, but, at bottom, just as effectively since he was influenced, as we have said, by the Company's intelligence and centuries-old experience—Father Genovesi was wracking his brain to find, there and then, different words.

The book invites comparison with *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* because of its theme and with *Pastoral Symphony* by reason of treatment of theme. It falls short of those less because of any incapacity on Soldati's part, as I believe, than because he does not take his subject seriously enough: the obscurities, important and fragile, with which he deals shrink in the clarity of rational prose like cave-plants, change their hues, and do not long survive.

As one can tell by the dust-jacket accounts of the authors' lives, both these novels are somewhat autobiographical, though to what extent they are so I have no way of knowing. The important thing is, neither of them

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sounds autobiographical. One feels that events or details are included, not because they actually happened to the author, but because they compose a world and a pattern which is primarily fictional. (For that matter, neither do the best autobiographies include events or details just because they happened.) However, *Before Noon* by Ramon Sender errs in this respect rather seriously.

Each of the three sections which loosely join to compose the book contains innumerable details which seem to be there because they were part of the life led by a boy of bourgeois family in Aragon just at the time of the first World War, and each is organized largely according to which city the boy is living in at the time. One gets to know Pepe and his world and to like them; Sender is a writer of intelligence and a reporter of taste; for these reasons alone I found the book worth reading. There is another reason as well. In the first two of these three sections, *Chronicle of Dawn* (first published sixteen years ago) and *Violent Griffin*, Pepe's proud love for a girl, Valentina, is convincingly realized; and both sections contain a long episode combining wonder and humor in a mixture and with a gaiety which is especially Sender's, as in his earlier and splendid novel *A Man's Place*. In the first section, Pepe's family vacations in an ancient castle where there are underground passages, relics, a superstitious shepherd, a lamia; these circumstances permit Sender, who has hitherto treated Pepe rather like a proud, idealistic Tom Sawyer, to compose an episode, whether fictional or autobiographical, of genuine coherence and economy. And the second section contains not only an episode as funny as this but also a character of some sublimity, a sort of holy fool who is also an artist tempted to vanity. The third section, *The Villa Julieta*, is inferior to the first two. The materials of the book are first rate; the treatment of them is only occasionally so.

Kokoro by Natsume Soseki must suffer under a similar judgment, and like *Before Noon* it derives some of its interest simply from being exotic. It was written in 1914 and is set at the time of the death of Emperor Meiji, in 1912. It contains two components: the first is an account of a young man's devotion to an older, mysteriously unhappy man (whom he calls Sensei, or teacher); the second is Sensei's written account of the earlier causes of his hidden tragedy; neither component is represented as much affecting the other, and it is only the second which becomes fictionally absorbing and, in part, realized. Sensei's sadness comes from his having betrayed his best friend in order to win the woman whom both of them love; the friend kills himself, without having exposed or even reproached Sensei, and Sensei and the woman marry, only to be held apart by his guilt, which she is mostly ignorant of; he commits suicide, to relieve his loneliness. A good part of the interest of the book derives, for me at least, from seeing this universal story modified by the specially Japanese modes of behavior; the delicacy and elaboration with which those Japanese gentle people made themselves miserable put us Americans to shame. (The best scene of nihilistic desperation I can remember reading in modern fiction is in Dazai's *The Setting Sun*: a drunken party in a bar,

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glimpsed by the central character and suggested with a delicacy which gives it a power that full treatment, à la Sartre or Kerouac, spoils utterly.)

As a record of the physical torment and spiritual desolation of a man driven by war to extremities, *Fires on the Plain* by Shohei Ooka is excelled by none I know of. To the defeated Japanese caught on Leyte, the island was physically inhospitable and its natives actively hostile; in these circumstances, defeated but not yet taken prisoner—indeed, not supposed to be captured alive—the soldiers reverted to an appalling anarchy. Simply as a reporting of this, the book is admirable. But it goes far beyond that. The narrator's spiritual changes, and his understanding of these changes, are commensurate with the events he experiences and are given us with economy and force. Three of these events will suggest something of the book's substance. At the outset, the narrator is told by his squad leader to kill himself because he is too sick to fight and hasn't enough food to gain admittance to the hospital (which has no food left); you are horrified. In the middle of the book, he is discovered, but not endangered, by a couple in the kitchen of a presbytery he has invaded, and simply because the woman screams in terror he shoots her dead; your horror becomes a profound pity for him. Later a dying man, noticing the starving narrator, offers him his arm for food as soon as he shall have died, but the narrator can bring himself to eat only the leeches swollen with the dead man's blood; your emotions at this point descend to a horror and pity which are almost unbearable. The novel is by no means flawless. It is marred by crudities of style; I have no idea how good the translation is, but I would guess that the "toughness" of the prose is not just the translator's fault. The profound disorientation and aimlessness from which the narrator suffers afflict the structure of the book as well; and his madness, understood and actual, vitiates not the horror of the events but the attempted resolution at the end of the book. Yet these imperfections do not spoil the book's essential excellence, and since it does not overdo the physical and most importantly concerns a spiritual development, there is neither a revolting sensationalism nor a numbing plethora of disgust in it; rather, it forces you to your ultimate position somewhat as violent satire forces. With a most uncomfortable difference—these Yahoos were really there, and there are no Houyhnhnms.

Formally, *Fires on the Plain* is out in the further reaches; it is an imaginary spiritual autobiography with elements of romance and novel both. *The Makioka Sisters* is as solidly in the heartland of the novel proper as Trollope. These two books, the best of the novels here under review, could not be less alike, in aim, tone, depth, width, polish, excitement. But if they are dead, I am a ghoul and glad of it.

Some Prefer Nettles, Tanizaki's first novel to be published in this country, was good, but *The Makioka Sisters*, his second here, is far more substantial. Tanizaki's way is to accumulate little by little impressions and events which are in themselves not very striking but which compose a world of great solidity. One essential ingredient in the composition of so mild and decent a world is an exact yet neutral language eschewing pyro-

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technics of wit, metaphor, rhetoric; to achieve this in English, the book has been more than fortunate in its translator, Edward G. Seidensticker; I was conscious of no awkwardnesses of word or phrase in it, but only of a happy consonance between the decent prose and the world it described. A summary of the book's story, such as it is, would sound as banal as that of any ordinary family chronicle, for its virtues are not primarily dramatic or narrative but scenic. Nor are the characters exciting in themselves or made fascinating by profound and subtle analyses. Nor are you allowed to dive into that world with the instancy which an Agee invites you to; much of *The Makioka Sisters* gives the effect of being in indirect discourse, held to the middle distance. Yet during the course of the book the reader becomes acquainted with these characters as he would with actual people and by the end he is in the position of old friend. The four Makioka sisters, the husbands and children of the older two, the suitors procured for the reluctant third sister, the lovers of the youngest, and all their acquaintance—these gentlefolk we come to know, by means of Tanizaki's unfailing tact, at the distance of good manners and polite intercourse. An active plot would engender an interest of a kind distracting to the total impression which the novelist is after, that of actual life; episodes dramatically rendered would violate the texture of subdued and courteous acquaintance; and amazing people in extreme situations, though they would have been more exciting in the short run, could never have left behind them that sense of a world dense with life which is the special reward of reading a pure novel. Yet Tanizaki does more than this: by recreating a gentle family now on the decline; by laying the action in the late 1930's when the Japanese war in China was about to become a part of the second World War; by lovingly brushing in scenes—Tanizaki is a superb scenist—of intrinsic beauty; by recounting the family's physical ills and economic anxieties and by portraying their Chekhovian reluctance to break with the past; by juxtaposing their love of cherry-blossom viewing in Kyoto, say, with their distaste for riding the subways in Tokyo: by all these and more, he creates effective patterns of nostalgia and regret. Much of the Japanese fiction I have read has tried to do something like this but has only partially succeeded; Tanizaki's nostalgia is sufficiently substantial to affect even a non-Japanese with its poignancy.

The Castle of Fratta calls for notice rather more adequate than a paragraph in an omnibus review, as would a newly discovered novel of Sir Walter Scott or Stendhal: it already belongs to history. It was written just one hundred years ago, though only now translated into English, and it has an aura of the past about it which makes it far more alien to us than any of the other novels in this review. It is not just that Venice from 1775-1848, the period covered by the novel, is of another world entirely—though it is—but more that Nievo's Romantic-enlightenment view of things and his fictional naïveté are no longer possible in a writer of any excellence. And it must be admitted that they had their drawbacks, not the least of which was wordiness. The translator of *The Castle of Fratta*

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cut the original Italian text of half a million words by a fourth and that was none too much. Still, you should know that the book exists and that it is fun to read. The story swashbuckles, the femme is fatale, the hypocrites are black as black, and motives are unperplexing; the politics are egregious, the ethics are forthright, religions are ardent; and the narrator abounds with health and good sense and yet is capable of sardonic humor. The novel is not what one would call great, but the pleasure of reading it is more than historical; it renders a coherent world novelistically, though it rather comes apart towards the end; Nievo's Venice was splendid in its decadence, his energy is a pleasure in itself, and he was a natural tale-teller (he wrote the novel in eight months, when he was 27 years old, and died before he had time to polish it). A fine satirical romance.

C. ROLAND WAGNER

The Moral Perspective of Humanism

IN A WAY, I suppose, I almost disqualify myself as a reviewer of this book[1] because my differences with the author are so elemental that all his efforts go to proving something which for me is impossible. But I hope to be able to do more than, so to speak, merely toot my own horn. If I may take the book as representative of a philosophy which is certainly widespread today and proceed to analyze its presuppositions by way of Mr. Kahler, something of value may be accomplished. For, in a real sense, the theme of *The Tower and the Abyss* is the leitmotif of our time: from Nietzsche to the Existentialists we have heard that the old order, the old values are gone (*really* gone) and the task of modern man is to reconstitute both "the shattered picture of the world" and the decent community of men. A good many people probably agreed with William Barrett when he wrote ten years ago (in *What is Existentialism?*) that "the modern world, the modern city, has made it increasingly difficult for any person to lead a life that is really his own. The forces of advertising, mass culture, crowding, traffic congestion, standardization, regimentation in and out of war, beat upon us all, threatening to reduce our personalities to mere figments and shadows." I don't think quite so many of us believe that with such assurance today, but undoubtedly a sizeable number of intellectuals still hold that the trend toward what Irving Howe calls a "sort of low-pressured, usually non-terroristic yet essentially unfree authoritarianism" is a real "possibility."

In his last major work, *Man the Measure* (praised by Mann, Einstein, Hermann Broch, Niebuhr, Barzun and Mumford), Erich Kahler traced the post-biological evolution of man from the sub-individualism of

[1] THE TOWER AND THE ABYSS, by *Erich Kahler*. Braziller. $6.00.

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primitive times, through the individualism of the Greek, Medieval and Renaissance periods, to the supra-individualism of the modern scientific and industrial collectives. His thesis, in that book and in *The Tower and the Abyss*, but more fully developed as a philosophical problem in the latter, is that the essentially "human" qualities of man—self-determination and self-transcendence—are in danger of being destroyed at the stage of evolution through which we are now passing. There is no doubt in Mr. Kahler's mind that we will continue to evolve in the direction of social interdependence with or without those precious qualities. The question for him remains, however: will the supra-human collective of the future exclude or contain the human community of the past? The choice, he believes, is still our own to make.

Mr. Kahler assembles an impressive array of evidence from many quarters—literary, artistic, philosophical, social and political—to prove his thesis. Concentration camps, mass production and over-specialization, nineteenth century *malaise*, twentieth century existentialism, nihilistic art, etc.,—all appear, explicitly or implicitly, to support his contention that the old values are essentially gone and that man is much the worse for it. Now Mr. Kahler does not intend to suggest that a return to a moral or religious absolutism is the solution to our problems. He calls himself a humanist and relativist. He simply perceives what he thinks are the unique qualities that have made man human, and he wants to keep him that way. The point of view should be pretty convincing to the non-religious reader and not entirely distasteful to some of the religious. But there is something wrong with it, I think, something that goes beyond a question of ascertainable fact. It is primarily a matter of cloudy moral perspective and a distorted sense of the world. It may be that here an ultimate difference of opinion exists beyond which there is no possible argument, but I cannot really think so. What we have in Mr. Kahler's work is a significant misreading of reality.

It may be true, for example, that the old values have (in some sense) really disappeared, but how can we be certain that man is much the worse for it? It is difficult to imagine a question more loaded with subjective pitfalls than whether men are more anxious, less integrated and generally unhappier than they were in former times. Yet how rare it is for writers to profess uncertainty about the quality of the inner life in other ages and other places! That life was more meaningful, more unified, more harmonious, when hierarchy and the Church ruled the world seems to be an unquestioned assumption among an astonishing number of intelligent people, both believers and non-believers, both liberals and conservatives. How can they possibly know? It is hard enough to determine if your next door neighbor is well integrated. If anything, I prefer the dogmatism of G. Rattray Taylor's remark (in his brilliant *Sex in History*) that "it is hardly too much to say that medieval Europe came to resemble a vast insane asylum." At least Taylor tries to examine what little evidence we have by persuasively translating

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medieval records into accessible psychoanalytic terms. Mr. Kahler, on the other hand, assuming with hardly a doubt that "a certain inner coherence... *did* prevail among human beings" then which does not prevail now, does little interpreting for us, but takes everything at face value. Because he does not analyze in depth, he tends to see historical changes as metamorphoses in human nature. He finds the Nazi atrocities, for example, wholly "a-human," involving "no feeling whatsoever," while the cruelties of the Borgias, of the Inquisition, of Genghis Khan, etc., no matter how horrible, always involved some "personal focus," some "organic coherence." Mr. Kahler quotes Mitscherlich and Mielke to support his view that the Nazi doctors were "not sadists" but were much more frightening: men who deadened themselves altogether to human feeling, "who up to the time when they yielded to the exacting demands of their political and military leaders had been scientists and physicians of perfect integrity." It is difficult to accept such an interpretation today. If this was the "consummate schizophrenia" that Mr. Kahler says it was—the concept flows from his earlier analysis of the German character, *Der Deutsche Charakter in der Geschichte Europas*, called by Thomas Mann "the standard work on the psychology of Germanness"—wouldn't it be truer to say that the Nazis could not *admit to themselves* the feelings they did have? But to say this would force him to abandon his phenomenological method and get at the realities. He could not be so dramatic or so obsessed by newness. He would not be able to say that our modern attitude toward crime is fundamentally new; that "philosophical alienation" today is entirely different from alienation in the past; that Baudelaire's *Une Charogne* marks the beginning of an "epoch," a "new transcendence"—a transcendence downward, into the "subexistential"—"radically different from all former transcendence... both Christian and romantic"; that Sartre's mystical union through nausea (rather than ecstasy) is a "totally new phenomenon" unlike any mysticism of the past; that T. S. Eliot and Jorge Guillén represent the emergence of a "new sensibility," opposing the fragmentariness of our world with the "novel" experience of "new spheres, new levels of existence."

Even granted that some of these alleged transformations are historically established, their moral effects are not as obvious as Mr. Kahler would have us believe. And that is even truer for the more popular liberal bogeymen of the day: the Bomb, Conformism, Communism, Overspecialization, McCarthyism, Loss of Values, Dehumanization of Art and Everything, Hidden Persuaders, etc. What have these things done to alter the substantial reality of human existence? That reality, I think, is rooted in the biology of the species and is defined by the slowly evolving nature of family life. If man's humanity is created within the family, then only by radically modifying the family can it be destroyed. The cultural phenomena mentioned above are externals, all of them—up to now, anyway—and Mr. Kahler doesn't even *try* to prove that family life has been substantially affected by them. He assumes it. His fantasy is of a universal and *successful* brainwashing spreading its constant and per-

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nicious influence throughout the world: "You cannot expect a man, after having served as a function for eight hours, to turn into a complete and personal human being in an hour or so"—especially with TV and public relations around to help prevent it. But why can't one expect it? This seems to be a fantasy which is shared by a good many intellectuals today. It is true that the collectivism which is said to be destroying us is something of a reality already, but it is a *social*, not yet a central *psychological* reality. We are still mainly at the individualistic (i. e., the inner-directed) stage of cultural evolution which began and continues now with the overthrowing of every kind of authority; and the individual is still emerging throughout the world, even in America. The allegedly boring and regimented work which modern man must do as a result of specialization is not necessarily harmful unless it decreases his flexibility of adaptation. The work may possibly mean less freedom on the job, but it is probably part of a larger cultural trend which involves more freedom at home. At least the actualities of freedom within family life ought to be closely investigated by the moral anthroplogist.

Clearly harmony is not yet with us, and this may be the reason for the so-called loss (or fear of the loss) of values in our world. The loss of values is not necessarily a cause or even a sign of new psychological failure. It is part of the growing pains of becoming mature. Of course, modern neurosis *looks* somewhat different from the neurosis of the past. The floating anxieties of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are phenomenologically distinct from the fears of former periods. But the root cause has not changed: it is the same old unwillingness of men—expressed in a new way—to see things as they are. In the middle ages men were afraid of God and the devil; today we are anxious that God and the devil do not exist. What a terrific load of guilt we must still bear for the assault on authority begun in the Renaissance! Whether one thinks of the assault of a value-free Science on the charms of Mother Nature or of the assault of the revolutionary son on the tyrannical father, the effects are the same: we are reminded that moral controls are merely human and relative, and we are overwhelmed by waves of anxiety. The anti-social demands of the unconscious are exactly the same as before, only now it looks as though "everything is permitted." Creeping slowly into modern consciousness is the terrible thought that there is really no "reason"—no moral or absolute reason, that is—why incestuous and homicidal wishes may not be gratified; no reason, indeed, but the good sense and maturity of the civilized human being. And maturity, apparently, is not enough. It is not that man's capacity to handle his unconscious drives has necessarily diminished (it may even have increased, if his capacity to tolerate the development of science is any criterion), but he is *afraid* that it has diminished. He is afraid that his ego is not strong enough to handle some of the superego functions of the past. The Nazis, for example, by implying that "everything is permitted," reminded us of the latent need within ourselves to imitate their actions and so forced us (and particularly Mr. Kahler) to place their atrocities at a safe distance by calling them unique.

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Mr. Kahler considers himself part of the existentialist tradition, which he believes holds the "only modern philosophical theory that is rooted in the experience of the human situation." He finds the tradition of Pascal, Kirkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Jaspers, Heidegger, Kafka, Sartre and Camus in closest touch with commonplace reality. In many respects, of course, this is true. But often the existentialist rebellion in favor of the living subject becomes a retreat into the "poetic" and abstract, a neurotic gesture disguised by cosmic philosophizing. In the case of Camus, whom Mr. Kahler presents as the finest example of existential thinking, such philosophizing abounds. We read in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (which Mr. Kahler quotes extensively) about the "estranged" man who achieves the freedom of "full" consciousness by living the life of a prisoner sentenced to death. This "authentic" man learns to encounter, in his most "lucid" moments, the "primeval hostility of the world" and the "laughable character of that habit... to perform the gestures that existence commands."

Is this the touch of commonplace reality? It may be true that the world sometimes appears hostile and the ordinary actions of men laughable, but it is no more than arrogant subjectivity in a sane intellectual today to seem to attribute those qualities inherently to the nature of things. Philosophical poetry is one thing; "poetic" philosophizing quite another.

Mr. Kahler is fond of philosophizing, but he is not very poetic. In fact his book is rather dull. His philosophy, however, well represents those humanist intellectuals more creative than he (including most of the writers, mentioned earlier, who praised *Man the Measure*) who reject equally traditional religion, rationalism and naturalism, and yet must believe in "something more" to give life meaning. They are refined romantics at heart, often disguising strong religious demands with such abstractions as "the inherent dignity of the individual" and "man's unique capacity for self-transcendence." Mr. Kahler defines the latter as the "spiritual" faculty, "man's faculty of going beyond himself." It is based, he says, on the capacity of human beings, and human beings alone, to distinguish the non-self from the self, to enter into a "conscious super-corporeal relationship with the non-self," and then to become capable of "vicarious feelings." Now initially it would seem impossible to disprove the uniqueness of this faculty unless we could explore the mental life of animals. But, after all, how did we disprove the Greek contention that man is the only *reasoning* animal? By *translating* the subjective meaning of "reason" into the objective behavioral criterion: learning from experience. And we soon saw that some animals do in fact learn from experience. So may we translate "self-transcendence" into something more observable: concern for others. Surely there is the seed of such concern among the anthropoids in the mother's attention to her offspring and in the father's temporary or permanent guardianship of the mother and offspring. At any rate, there is nothing in human nature that cannot reasonably be understood to be grounded in animal nature. Humanism and naturalism are in harmony for those who are content to have it that way.

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IRVING SINGER

Ortega on Love

As Ecclesiastes might have said: Of the making of love there is no end. Yet love itself is an exceedingly rare phenomenon. If it is that which moves the universe, as Dante seemed to think, it must do so in strange and mysterious ways. Perhaps that is why novelists have made it their stock-in-trade, and scientists have tended to ignore it. Now there appears an English translation of *Estudios sobre el amor* by José Ortega y Gasset.[1] It is a fascinating little book—in fact too fascinating, for it is sure to be scorned by *les hommes sérieux*. Yet in its diffuse and aimless way perhaps it does more than a lengthy treatise might have.

Ever since Plato spoke of love as "a desire for generation and birth in beauty," philosophers have often defined love as one kind of desire or another. Ortega cites Aquinas, who speaks of love as the desire for something good in so far as it is good. He could also have cited Freud, for whom love is fundamentally desire for anything in so far as it is sexual.

There is something odd about this way of defining love. It is as if a mysterious stranger had asked you what movies look like and instead of telling him about images darting across the screen you showed him a reel of film. Of course there is a close connection between the movies and the film. Scientists explain the connection when they talk about the stroboscopic effect. But movies are movies and film is film. As a great simpleton once said: Everything is what it is and not another thing. Love is what it is; it is not desire, which is another thing.

Ortega sees this. He strenuously insists that sentiments like love and hate must not be confused with desires or appetites. He argues that love is usually followed by desire, for instance the desire for sexual union, but that desire can exist without love (the addict desires drugs at the same time that he hates them) and love can occur in its purity prior to any desire. To desire something is to want to possess it, to incorporate it within oneself; to love is to forego possession and "to make oneself a part of the beloved."

Love is not desire, then. But shall we say that desire is a mere consequence of love, an accompaniment that in no way constitutes its being? I think not. I think Ortega goes too far. In his eagerness to escape the confusion between sentiments and appetites, he acts as if each could be defined independently of the other. When he speaks of sexual desire as being different from love, he observes that sexuality can be satisfied by any number of objects whereas love is highly selective. But in another place, he clearly recognizes that sex is nine-tenths literary genre: "lust is not an instinct, but a specifically human creation—like literature. In both, the most important factor is imagination." If this is so, as I

[1] ON LOVE: ASPECTS OF A SINGLE THEME, by *José Ortega y Gasset*. Translated by *Toby Talbot*. Meridian Books. $3.50.

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firmly believe it to be, perhaps the selectivity of love and the indiscriminateness of sex are more closely related than Ortega allows. Lust appears when love has been stymied. The man who cannot love any woman in particular will try to recoup his losses by going through "the act of love" with a succession of women. Since his desire arose out of an inability to love, he will probably use his erotic imagination for the sake of hating them all. On the other hand, the real lover finds it essential to do with a particular woman what he knows that he could do with any other. Love is expressed by the imaginative act of deploying one's sexuality in the unique direction of the beloved. It is because they know that all women like flowers that each of them is flattered when a man sends bouquets only to her.

Desire is, therefore, more than a mere consequence of love. To desire is not necessarily to love; but to love is *at least* to desire. The lover desires the happiness of the beloved; the parent desires the development of the child; the friend desires the welfare of his comrade. In each case, one's love requires making the other a part of oneself as well as making oneself a part of him. The lover's desire can succeed only if he attains physical and spiritual contact with the beloved, the parent's only if he actually contributes to the rearing of the child, the friend's only if he is intimate at the same time as he keeps a certain distance. Furthermore, a good deal of love consists in the desire to be what the beloved is, and in that sense to incorporate the beloved within oneself. This is especially evident in homosexual love, but it applies to all relations. The brusque young man is drawn to the graceful lady by his very desire to change into her, to be graceful himself.

Having told us what love is not, Ortega goes on to define it. Each time he does so, however, the formulation changes tremendously. The book, a collection of essays written at different times, is sub-titled "aspects of a single theme." What that theme could be I am not at all sure. Certainly it is not a univocal way of defining love. Moving from one definition of Ortega's to another is like watching Picasso paint in the film *Le Mystère Picasso*. Version succeeds version with astounding rapidity, sometimes getting better, sometimes worse. One eventually feels the critic's impulse to narrow the flow of brilliant, but often damaging, improvisation; one wants to shout at the artist to stop, to leave things alone, not to fiddle any more. But with relentless fertility the ideas multiply and disperse. For these men are really sorcerers' apprentices, albeit of the highest order, artists in the service of teeming virtuosity rather than ultimate taste.

I shall not try to enumerate Ortega's different formulations. Some of them are probably characterizations and not definitions at all. Ortega sometimes throws us off by acting as if these characterizations were intended to define the word; actually they add a bit of extra, but inessential description—somewhat like an answer to the question "What is a Communist?" which I read in a magazine a few years ago: "A Communist is a dirty rat." In this vein Ortega says that love is "a centrifugal act of

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the soul in constant flux that goes towards the object and envelops it in warm corroboration, uniting us with it and positively affirming its being." The idea of love as a kind of affirmation interests me and I shall return to it later. As for the rest of this statement, which sounds a little like a description of central heating, I pass it over in respectful silence. In another place Ortega says it is "essential for true love to be born suddenly and never to die." ("Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds . . . " ?) Maybe he's right. But I can't help feeling like the sceptical little boy who came upon a copy of Kipling's *Just So Stories* and scrutinizing the title remarked: "Well, I doubt it." I feel that way too when I read that love is "eternally unsatisfied." My reaction is: he's not talking about men and women in love; he's talking about "swains" or something like that.

Some of the other formulations are more suggestive and warrant more careful treatment. Consider the idea that to be in love is "to continually and intentionally give life to something which depends upon us. Loving is perennial vivification, creation and intentional preservation of what is loved." I find this very hard to accept. To give life to something, to create it, to make it depend upon us is not to love it. Loving involves accepting someone as an independent being. What we create may have life, like the bawling infant that has just been pushed on stage, but it does not yet have a life of its own. It attains that once it has emancipated itself from the dependency of creation. Only then is it capable of loving and being loved. There is nothing surprising in the fact that parents and children rarely love each other. For the parents this means accepting the children as individuals capable of independent development: but that seems to negate the fact that the child is the parent's offspring, *his* creation. For their part, children are often embarrassed at the necessity of loving parents they never chose, about whom they weren't even consulted. "*I* didn't ask to be born," meaning "I didn't ask to be born to *you*." One of the basic assumptions in Genesis is that man should love God because God is his creator. I have never been able to see why. Nor is there any guarantee of God's love merely in the fact of creation, even continual creation. Perhaps God no longer exists because man has become more enlightened in his demands for love.

Similarly, I fail to share Ortega's belief in the Platonic doctrine that erotic love culminates with a desire "to leave, as testimony of the union, a child in whom the perfections of the beloved are perpetuated and affirmed." Children are not created as testimonials of a loving union, though they may be created in the hope that others or possibly the participants themselves will be fooled into thinking so. Love is itself an affirmation of the beloved; from this point of view, procreation is an act of supererogation. Whatever the window-dressing that masks our behavior, children are made as a means of joint self-expression. The parent creates just as the artist does: in order to express himself by what he does, in order to develop potentialities which, but for the collaboration of the beloved, might otherwise have atrophied. Where there is love between

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the parents, neither has the need to duplicate the being of the beloved. In fact, if Daddy wants a little girl just like Mommy, you can be sure that Daddy is dissatisfied with Mommy as she is. Not loving her as an adult, he absurdly thinks she might be more attractive as a little girl. The true lover accepts the beloved as she is; he has no need to perpetuate her, to make a living mausoleum.

In speaking just now of resemblances between the parent and the artist, I did not wish to minimize the differences, which are equally striking. There is something obscure, something hidden, about Proust's saying he wanted his novels published just as a loving parent would want his children to succeed in the world. An artist cannot love his production in the way that a parent may eventually come to love his child. Works of art are dead. Each audience will interpret them differently, but they themselves have no development beyond the one the artist has already given them. If a sculptor loves his statue, as Pygmalion loved the beautiful Galatea, it is probably himself, his own aesthetic activity, that the man is enamored of. Perhaps it is not irrelevant that in one version of the myth Pygmalion is a misogynist and that in another he makes his statue as an image to Aphrodite, who had thwarted his impulse to love by refusing to let him lie with her. In this connection, I see the point of Plato's idea that it is nobler to create people than things. If you limit yourself to the creation of objects, your love runs the risk of becoming narcissistic.

Thus far I have said little about Ortega's conception of love as affirmation. Unfortunately, he says little about it himself. He speaks of love as "a cordial, affirmative interest in another person for himself." In one excellent passage he writes: "[Love] is involved in the affirmation of its object. Think of what it is to love art or your country: it consists of never doubting for an instant their right to exist; it is like recognizing and confirming at each moment that they are worthy of existence. This, not in the manner of a judge who coldly passes a sentence in recognition of a right, but in such a way that the favorable decision is, at the same time, participation in and enactment of that right."

This seems to me to be the right track. If only Ortega had gone further along it! Instead, he loses heart and falls back on Platonism, like everyone else. In trying to explain what it is the lover affirms, the nature of his choice in love, Ortega suggests that it is always the beauty of the beloved. This is what Plato had said except that Ortega, addressing a Western rather than a Greek audience, has to stress the fact that true beauty is not physical but spiritual. Love thus becomes adherence to a type of humanity considered best; it is "a decision on a certain type of human being, symbolically presented in the details of the face, voice and gestures."

In effect, this position duplicates that of Aquinas. The category of desire has been dropped but there is the same concern for something good in so far as it is good. In other words, there is the same identification of loving and evaluating. This, in my opinion, is the greatest mistake of all. Everyone is impelled towards what is good; and certainly we could

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not love another unless there were *something* admirable about him. But loving is not evaluating. To evaluate is to reach a decision about the goodness of an object. Our judgment purports to be objective. Hamlet may be right when he says that nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so; this does not diminish the fact that we think of the goodness or badness as somehow belonging to the object. With loving, the situation is quite different. To love is not to detect a value in the beloved; it is not a decision about worth or beauty. It is a way of acting *as if* the beloved were infinitely valuable, which is to say it is not really concerned about actual goodness or badness. Love is to evaluation as imagination is to reality. Like imagination, love *does* something to its object. It does not create it, it does not make it dependent. It does not change it. It accepts it as it is; but in doing so, it also affirms the significance of being this sort of thing. The affirmation in which love consists is neither the recognition of a right nor the perception of a quality; it is the bestowing of a courtesy—*cortesia*, reminiscent of medieval courtliness. Love acts as if the object attains perfection merely in being itself. Since, as this world goes, nothing is perfect, the lover bestows upon the beloved something he could never have found in her: the tribute of being treated as what she is not at the same time as she is accepted as what she is, the dignity of being accorded a perfection she obviously does not have. To the lover the beloved is both Aphrodite and herself.

That love is not the same as evaluation becomes perfectly clear when we consider the difference between saying something is not good or beautiful and saying it is not lovable. There are many things that in many respects are neither good nor beautiful. But is there anything that is not lovable, completely incapable of being loved by someone, sometime, somehow? Some people say God is love, meaning that He is prepared to love everything. Would they say that He is prepared to find it all beautiful? Probably not. The connoisseur says to the spectator: "How can you admire that painting? Its colors are so monotonous." He is suggesting a reason for finding the painting unaesthetic. But there is no comparable reason to be adduced in matters of love. I have heard mothers say to their sons: "How can you love that woman? She's so plain." Are they giving a reason for not loving a person? Certainly not. Nor is this because love adheres to spiritual beauty rather than physical—it would not help for the young man to reply: "Ah, but she has such a good heart." If he answers this way, he has made the same confusion as his critic and has really surrendered the right to love. For if he were acting in good faith, he would have to renounce his beloved once his mother points out that really the lady is something of a bitch. The true lover does not argue the excellence of his beloved. He takes it for granted, even though he knows it does not exist.

In the scale of evaluation, we fully accept only the best. In the scale of love, we treat as best whatever we accept. This does not mean that love involves a dissolution of standards, as the romantics assumed in thinking that love of life meant subjecting oneself indiscriminately to every kind

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of experience. In accepting the beloved, the lover can nevertheless desire her to attain the best that she is capable of. In fact, happiness in love—that ephemeral condition few lovers attain—requires a concern for the mutual development of potentialities. In *The Art of Loving*, Erich Fromm distinguishes between mother's love and father's love, the former being an acceptance under any circumstances, the latter involving standards of better or worse. I think Fromm's labels are misleading since "mother's love" is not limited to mothers, in whom it is often lacking, and "father's love" is really morality or ambition rather than love itself. But the distinction is a good one and it is useful to think of it in terms of the two heads of family, mother and father. Just as their satisfying union is necessary for a stable household, so too does successful love depend upon a viable association between accepting another and being able to use your evaluation of her potentialities for the sake of developing her.

Of course, it is also possible to love a woman who really is good or beautiful in herself. And certainly the superiority of the beloved makes it *easier* to love her. But this is a causal factor: it does not explain the nature of love. We may love a woman because she has good looks, a good figure, a good heart, and a good mind—we love her *because* of these attributes, we do not love her *for* them. If our capacity for loving were great enough, we would not mind the absence of these qualities, just as a gentleman will hold the door for a charwoman as readily as for a princess.

Love is freely given; it bloweth where it listeth. This is seen more clearly by Cervantes than by Ortega. Don Quixote is not wholly or consistently mad: when the wind is southerly, he knows a hawk from a handsaw better than most men. In a couple of places the Don clearly recognizes that his beloved Dulcinea del Toboso is really the peasant wench Aldonza Lorenzo. Far from diminishing his chivalric love, this awareness intensifies it. As he says, he "contemplates her as she needs must be." He sees her under the aspect of his imagination. The less lovable she may appear to be, the more his feat of loving her proves that the ways of love are not those of the calculating common-sensical world. Madness appears when the feat becomes exclusive and the reality of Aldonza no longer figures in it, as if the Don were a man who wanted to prove the fact of gravity by jumping from a tower. It is not in dignifying the wench that his madness consists.

Indeed, one tends to be suspicious of men who love distinguished or talented women. It is as if they bestowed upon the beloved what she already has. This often happens in people without imagination. They swoon before official beauties, like tourists who are deeply impressed by a monument because it gets three stars in the guide book. In another age the objects of devotion were titled ladies or queens of fashion. In our time, they more often fall within the spectrum of public entertainers—everything from a delightfully vulgar female like Jayne Mansfield to a big-bosomed thrush like Elizabeth Schwartzkopf. The bestowing which defines this kind of infatuation is derivative from what everyone else thinks. It is largely dependent on the social presence of the woman, her

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sheer publicity. The ardent young man thinks he loves the lady because his emotions are so tumultuous. Actually, he is in love with the system of evaluations that hide her from his view, even if they happen to be appropriate to what she is.

There is no disputing about love, which may be why no two people agree. When the Duchesse de Guermantes laments the fact that Swann should have fallen for so inferior a creature as Odette, Proust comments: "It is as if one would be surprised that a patient should deign to undergo cholera given him by so petty a thing as a bacillus." What really galls the Duchesse, in my opinion, is less the lowly status of Odette than Swann's failure to have consulted her about the advisability of falling in love. But how could he? Love is private; only evaluation is public. Lovers are, in Sartre's words, "seuls au monde" because their intimacy is a matter of feeling and can hardly be communicated to the outsiders. It is the sense of being an outsider to the privacy of others that offends a puritan like the Duchesse de Guermantes more than anything else. Society is rendered uneasy by these eddies of intimate isolation that leave the mainstream and dally along the shore. Whence the institution of marriage, which is a public event requiring official documents and a social ceremony. The wedding ring is not a sign of bondage to the spouse: it is a demonstration of allegiance to society.

At the same time that we insist upon the differences between loving and evaluating, we must also recognize the closeness of their relation. Love is variation on the theme of evaluation. Without evaluation love turns into passion, which is another world entirely. Where love plays out the pretence of infinite perfection, passion is simply unconcerned about value. I don't think it is a question of love being active while passion is passive, as Ortega says, following the grand tradition of western philosophy. I think the main difference lies in the fact that passion ignores the possible beauty or goodness of its object. It wants what it wants merely as a way of satisfying a need, without introducing questions of worth. While love is stereoscopic and ambles towards its object by shuttling from reality to imagination, passion stupidly makes a bee-line for its goal. It can't wait, just as an animal can't. There is something pleasantly civilized about "love for wine, women, and song"; there is something horribly brutish about "passion for wine, women, and song." Women recoil from men who "love" them "with a passion": they rightly sense the contradiction.

It is because Ortega fails to understand the relation between love and evaluation that his attack on Stendhal lacks much of the force it might have had. Ortega wishes to show that crystallization, as Stendhal conceives of it, cannot explain the nature of love since crystallization involves illusion, self-deception, whereas love does not. In presenting his case, Ortega distinguishes between being in love and falling in love. He speaks of falling in love as inferior to genuine love, a violent and frantic substitute for the real thing. He claims that Stendhal mistook the one for the other, that he described falling in love but thought he was

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talking about love itself. At this point, Ortega's discussion is brilliant, particularly his analysis of falling in love as a phenomenon of attention akin to self-hypnosis. What I find lacking is that last full measure of devotion which might have made some sense out of Stendhal. When I look back at *De l'amour* and try to see what it is that Ortega has missed, I discover that his very kinship with Stendhal has eluded him and this is what throws him off. Notice the words in which Stendhal describes crystallization: "I call crystallization that process of the mind which discovers fresh perfections in its beloved at every turn of events." Ortega might have said the same himself. It is only the idea that crystallization is illusory which annoys him. He shares the mistake of thinking that love discovers perfections.

Given this underlying kinship, just how penetrating is Ortega's criticism of Stendhal? It is as if they were talking about different, though compatible aspects of the same thing, but each doing so in a way that prevents him from seeing the unity of the thing. Stendhal is impressed by the play of imagination and the way the lover will treat his beloved as something grander than she is. When the truth begins to seep through the cloud-dust which is the mind of the Stendhalian lover, he falls out of love until such time as his imagination, like a wet-cell battery, can recharge itself. *This* is not love, Ortega says, and he is right. But he is right for the wrong reasons. Stendhal's mistake consists in failing to recognize that we can act as if something is the case even though we know it is not. The lover bestows perfection upon the beloved in *treating* her as though she were perfect; he does not take leave of his senses (unless he is "falling in love," which is a special case, not relevant here). Being in love and treating the beloved the way everyone would like to be treated does not mean living in illusion. It is this aspect that Ortega understands. Unfortunately, he takes it to mean that love "has its psychic source in the qualities of the beloved." Not only is this false, since love originates in the lover's need to love (a point that Stendhal saw very clearly), but also it opens Ortega's position to healthy Stendhalian scepticism. Ortega claims that love is too pervasive and fundamental to be based on error. Stendhal shrugs his shoulders. Why not? he says: people deceive themselves, all things change, every human relationship is precarious. Perhaps what Ortega calls genuine love does not exist—only boredom and falling in love. This kind of scepticism is honest and fairly argued, though in Stendhal accompanied by a compensatory swagger. I am not convinced that Ortega can answer it adequately.

At the same time, I think Stendhal, if he is right, is also right for the wrong reasons. Just because the lover can always make mistakes about the beloved, it does not follow that love is inherently illusory. Love is not a way of making discoveries and therefore it cannot be a way of making mistakes. In every human relationship, hatred or disgust as well as love, there are discoveries and there are mistakes. But the sentiments themselves cannot be defined in terms of either. If Stendhal insists that love is precisely that sentiment which inevitably gives rise to errors of

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judgment, I can only assume he is talking about the phenomenon of falling in love rather than love itself. And in this respect, what is true of falling in love would also be true of losing one's temper, feeling overwhelming pride, bursting with hatred, and every other violent emotion.

The debate between Ortega and Stendhal is complicated by the fact that in one place at least Ortega seems to accept the doctrine he has so vigorously attacked elsewhere. In the last essay, just a hundred pages after Stendhal has been dismissed as "a man who never truly loved nor, above all, was ever truly loved," we find Ortega saying the following: "Romantic love—which is, in my opinion, the prototype and summit of all eroticisms—is characterized by its simultaneously possessing these two ingredients: a feeling of being 'enchanted' by another being who produces complete 'illusion' in us, and a feeling of being absorbed by him to the core of our being. . . . A person in love feels himself totally surrendered to the one he loves. . . . " Since Ortega does little to clarify his use of the words "enchanted" and "illusion," I can only stand in amazement at this apparent capitulation to the Stendhalian heresy.

The second idea in Ortega's statement, that of letting oneself be absorbed by the beloved, is interesting as a further description of love. Ortega speaks perceptively about the "unwilled surrender" which the lover invariably feels. What he says is correct, I think, and serves to illustrate the importance of grace in every relationship, not merely that of religious love. The ability to get what one wants by, in a sense and in a certain way, no longer wanting it is a disposition without which love could not exist. We learn how to love by learning how to surrender, not out of despair but with faith in the sustaining presence of the beloved, not quietistically but with a sense of adventure. I think of the pilot in the film *Breaking Through the Sound Barrier* who magically exceeds the speed of sound by suddenly reversing the controls. I also think of Julien Sorel, who succeeds with Mme de Rênal only when he bursts into tears and spontaneously gives up his plans for seducing her.

Ortega's comments on love are sharpened by many a shrewd remark about men and women and their relations with one another. For me these suggestive insights are interesting less as commentary upon human nature than as reflections of the Spanish soul. When Ortega says that every woman presents to the public a conventional impersonal mask but lives her true life in the recesses of her privacy, I see ladies on a trellised balcony, their mysterious faces obscured by mantillas and silken fans. When he says that every man lives for the sake of public appearances and theatrical demonstrations, I see the matador baring his breast to the bull and offering his heart to the ladies. Ortega suggests that women are by nature irrational and this is what endears them to man, the rational being; that women are a retrogressive force in human selection, preferring to mate with mediocrities rather than the superior individuals that men generally wish to emulate; that for women, living instinctively means surrender of oneself, for men, the possession of others—particularly the possession of women; that men are restless because of super-abundant

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imagination, whereas women have superior understanding of realities but are generally deficient in imagination.

How are we to take these courageous generalizations? I feel they have something in common with bull-fighting and Spanish dancing, though I am not sure just what it is. Perhaps it is a certain dualism between body and soul that is characteristically Spanish. In no other tradition does one find the same strident effort to reconcile extremes of spirituality and animality, of religiosity and violence, of civilization and brutality. The matador's art is one of delicacy and imagination; yet it is the art of a butcher. The Spanish dancer wears a long formal gown and keeps her torso rigid; but her feet beat out a dionysian rhythm which her upper half pretends to ignore. Given this peculiar kind of dualism, originating in Manicheanism perhaps, it is not surprising that Ortega should divide the sexes as he does. Despite his desire to open Spanish thinking to the wider currents of European culture, it is primarily as a Spaniard that he himself thinks. I don't condemn this in him; but neither do I wish to overlook it. It is his true and authentic character as a Spaniard that makes him say in the very first sentence of the book: "Let us begin by talking about love, but not about 'love affairs.' " Stendhal would have been scandalized, though also amused: why not talk about love affairs? Aren't we interested in seeing how people relate to one another in all revealing situations? This is a Frenchman's way of dealing with the subject, and it issues into anecdotes that make Stendhal what he is—to say nothing of Montaigne, Saint-Simon, Proust, Sartre, etc. For Ortega the anecdotes and the love affairs are all irrelevant. He is a Spaniard: it is the *institution* of love which matters most to him.

Man is the only animal that loves, just as he is the only animal that hates. Why is it, then, that since the age of rationalism—when (ironically) philosophers thought that man was to be defined in terms of reason, not feeling—there has been no really thorough philosophy of the sentiments? Ortega, too, is astounded by this failure in modern thinking. If it is ever overcome, much of the credit will go to his pioneering work. In this age of analysis, this age of techniques, this age of instrumental refinements, fuzzy subjects are left to fuzzy minds. There is no fuzzier subject than love; there are few minds less inclined to fuzziness than Ortega's. Here as in his other writing,[2] his example *could* have a salutary effect on the barrenness of so much contemporary English and American philosophy. "Why write," he asks, "if this too easy activity of pushing a pen across paper is not given a certain bull-fighting risk and we do not approach dangerous, agile, and two-horned topics?" That's the spirit! *¡Olé!*

[2] This is a convenient place for me to mention *Man and People*, Ortega's posthumous book on social philosophy which has recently appeared (W. W. Norton, $4.50).

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GEORGE BARBAROW

Cunha's Angry History

THERE IS CONSISTENCY in the facts that Euclides da Cunha (1866-1909) was a creative writer and that at the close of his life he was a professor of logic; this extraordinary Brazilian was also adept at military and civil engineering, verse writing, and geodesy. Accustomed as we are to the notorious contemporary plethora of singly specialized experts, Cunha's versatility seems incredible. It is as if Leonardo had suddenly reappeared. We are sure that engineers can neither read nor write, and that writers need escort when crossing streets; we are therefore surprised to find an engineer creating an analogy with history as a base, surely one of the high forms of literary art.

Os Sertões[1] (1902) belongs in no section of a categorized library; it fits Philosophy as well as History, Sociology as well as Geography. In such a modern library, for example, there is no one shelf that will hold all the works of Thorstein Veblen, no comfortable spot for *Finnegans Wake* or for *Cybernetics*, yet the pressure to find such a place for *The Backlands* apparently led to the addition of "rebellion" to Cunha's title, thus modifying and weakening its significance. *Os Sertões* is not about rebellion, but about atavism, yet it would also be a mistake to call it "Atavism in the Backlands," because there is more than atavism in it, just as there is much more than rebellion. The book is no doubt properly to be regarded as History, although the author states in a Preliminary Note that, "It is our purpose to sketch in . . . the most significant present-day characteristics of the subraces to be found in the backlands of Brazil," (Anthropology!), and later called it " . . . this barbarous book of my youth, this monstrous poem of brutality and force . . . " It is history like no other, except that it has a tone of authenticity similar to that emanating from *The Peloponnesian War*, the sense of unhurried cultural description found in *The Conquest of Peru*, the feeling of spatial dimension in *War and Peace*, the shocking close views in *Sevastopol*. It is history that contains a biography of the rebel leader nowise surpassed by the personality-conscious Gibbon; that contains also an informed enthusiasm for fauna and flora and geology possessed by few persons, and here rivalling the *Beagle*-eyed Darwin in its attention to detail.

Os Sertões need not be read as history at all, if it is considered in the light of a general remark by Yvor Winters: " . . . it is worth noting that the historian is no longer allowed the privilege of shaping scenes in the interests of dramatic propriety, nor of analyzing the emotions of his

[1] REBELLION IN THE BACKLANDS (OS SERTÕES, lit. THE BACKLANDS), by *Euclides da Cunha*. Translation by *Samuel Putnam* of 16th edition. University of Chicago Press: hardback, 1944; Phoenix Books paperback (plates reduced in size), 1957. $1.95.

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characters. He must confine himself to the material in his documents, and if he wishes to go beyond what is given, he must speculate honestly as a bystander."[2]

Cunha was a participant, as a journalist, in the Fourth Expedition to Canudos, which exterminated a community of rebels there, and he deliberately analyzes not only the emotions of others, but also his own, and implicates in guilt for a "crime," not only the Brazilian government, but also the retrograde ("not degenerate") backlanders, the brave soldiers, and the reader himself. Thus the book is only nominally a history. The events described could have been invented (by a curious slip, one of our liberal weeklies listed it under Fiction among its summaries of the outstanding publications of 1944), because at this distance and at this time, the author's arrangement of established facts takes precedence over the facts themselves. Metaphors override literal subject matter (observed and recorded events) as they do in any work of art; as with *Hamlet* or *Oedipus*, it is of secondary importance whether the original actions really "happened." And Cunha is so little concerned with scholarly etiquette that he castigates,

> . . . we played in this action the singular role of unconscious mercenaries . . .

decries,

> The campaign in question marked a backward step, an ebb in the direction of the past. It was in the integral sense of the word a crime and, as such, to be denounced . . .

condemns,

> Canudos was appropriately enough surrounded by a girdle of mountains. It was a parenthesis, a hiatus. It was a vacuum. It did not exist. Once having crossed that cordon of mountains, no one sinned any more. An astounding miracle was accomplished, and time was turned backward for a number of centuries. As one came down the slopes and caught sight of the enormous bandit's den that was huddled there, he might well imagine that some obscure and bloody drama of the Stone Age was here taking place. The setting was sufficiently suggestive. The actors, on one side and the other, Negroes, caboclos, white and yellow skinned, bore on their countenances the indelible imprint of many races—races which could be united only upon the common plane of their lower and evil instincts. A primitive animality, slowly expunged by civilization, was here being resurrected intact. The knot was being undone at last. In place of the stone hatchet and the

[2] *The Hudson Review*, IX (Autumn 1956), [P. 361.]

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> harpoon made of bone were the sword and the rifle; but the knife was still there to recall the cutting edge of the ancient flint, and man might flourish it with nothing to fear—not even the judgment of the remote future . . .

and ends in bitterness,

> The trouble is that we do not have today a Maudsley for acts of madness and crimes on the part of nations . . .

yet manages to sustain an extraordinary sense of objectivity throughout; Cunha is the Maudsley (an admired psychologist) whose absence he laments; his denunciation of the crime of Canudos is a denunciation of crimes of the future also, for his intuitive revelation of the fundamental motives of the "actors" of the "Stone Age drama" foreshadows more recent events, each made memorable by the name of a place: Guernica, Monte Cassino, Stalingrad, Buchenwald, Lidice, Hamburg, Malmédy, Berlin, Tokyo, Hiroshima, Budapest. It has taken the unamazed, accurate engineer's eye to discover the perilous proximity of the Paleolithic and Atomic ages, and the ultimate response is a cry of protest.

The engineer's eye is directed by an artist's temperament, and thus made capable of selecting among a staggering number of observed details, and of assembling them in significant order. The division of parts is deceptively simple: I—The Backlands, II—The Rebellion. The frantic actions at the end of Part II are the final evolutions of the nearly imperceptible geologic movements of the beginning, where the geographic description is used to reveal cataclysmic forces. The setting of the "Stone Age drama" is a product of both seismic and cosmic storms, a struggle between earth and sea, a constant battle between air and rocks. There follows in "Man" a pageant of types and races, in conflict among themselves and in conflict with their various environments, and at last one man, Antonio Vicente Mendes Maciel, Antonio Conselheiro, Anthony the Counselor, the distorted imitation of John the Baptist, who by 1896 was the head of a community of perhaps fifteen thousand recalcitrants—men, women, and children—bound for glory at the Millennium (presumably 1900). It was a miscellaneous jumble of human flotsam; bandits, refugees from religious and secular law, misfits, and failed farmers. Against them marched four fumbling military expeditions, the last powerful enough to transform the "mud-walled Troy" of the backlanders into a "crude slaughter pen."

Such a transformation could not have been accomplished, however, before the soldiers had unlearned their training in classic textbook warfare and learned to fight like the backlanders, animal fashion, with tooth and claw. It was this forced reversion that led Cunha into a chain of reflection culminating in his remarks about "primitive animality" uncovered in a place where "no one sinned any more." He had more than

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enough sensibility to know that simple anathemas would not make his points for him; indeed, the parts quoted above represent nearly the sum of the direct personal expressions of anger and despair to be found in *Os Sertões*. This book has the character of a large parable, a compressed earth-history and culture-history at one time, gaining some of its strength because it deals with subject matter that "actually happened," yet attaining far more because of the author's genius for metaphor and simile. He who had observed a process in a remote place in another century could write a description of the building of a "city" that would fit the construction of most cities of the past and present:

> The settlement, accordingly, grew in dizzying fashion, sprawling out over the hills. The dwellings which were thrown up being extremely rude ones, the homeless multitude was able to erect as many as a dozen a day; and, as this colossal weed patch took shape, it appeared to reflect in its physical characteristics, as if by a stereographic process, the moral attributes of the social strata that had found refuge there. It was the objectivization of a tremendous insanity. A living document whose implications were not to be evaded, a piece of direct corpus delicti evidence on the aberrations of a populace. It was all done wholly at random, with the fervor of the mad.

And he could make plausible the inevitable action that is taken against adamant defense, by citing the hollow, but nevertheless always accepted reasoning:

> Obviously, other measures were imperatively called for in dealing with a foe who was so impervious to all the forces of Nature, so schooled in havoc and destruction . . . and so, a certain lieutenant . . . now had them bring up from the camp dozens of dynamite bombs. This was fitting enough; it was absolutely the only thing to be done; for the sertanejos had inverted all the psychology of ordinary warfare; their resistance was stiffened by reverses, and they were strengthened by hunger, hardened by defeat.

The dynamite, symbol and symptom of frustration, is set off, with effects,

> And now, from the portion of the village beyond, there came an indescribable sound of weeping and wailing, screams and imprecations, reflective at once of terror and of pain, of anger and exasperation, on the part of the tortured multitude that was bellowing there. Amid the glow of the flames shadowy figures could be seen darting convulsively in and out: women fleeing their burning hovels, carrying their young ones in their arms or dragging them along as they ran down the lanes and disappeared in the maze of huts; figures fleeing wildly in every direction; floundering on the ground, their clothing in flames; bodies burned and writhing in agony, like human firebrands . . .

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and merely produces more of that "inverted psychology" it was supposed to destroy:

> And then it was that everywhere of a sudden, only a couple of paces distant from the line of fire, sinister physiognomies made their unexpected appearance, begrimed masklike faces, naked bosoms scarred and singed, as the jagunços once more, boldly, insanely, came back to the fray.
>
> These figures, these visages, had come to slay their adversary in his own trenches . . .

Os Sertões is as much a tour of the backlands of mankind as of the backlands of Brazil. It could be such a great analogy only because it is the work of an artist. The Canudos Campaign was an insignificant event in world affairs, not only because of its small size, but also because of its purely local effects. So far as the rest of the world is concerned, the conflict existed only as the occasion for Cunha's book, and this may be the reason that his name is recognized only by the relatively few persons who have read *Os Sertões*, yet few who have read it can deny its emotional power and its amazing breadth of view. Here is a microcosm in 476 pages, compact, replete with overtones; it grows everywhere bigger than its original reason for being, and bigger still than the author's stated excuse for writing it. An apparent verbosity here frightens the casual bookstore browser, as it does in the work of Joyce; perhaps the publisher put "rebellion" into the title in order to sell a few more copies, and perhaps this expedient has helped to steer away more potential buyers than it has attracted. The trick does the book no good. Another "easy reading" strategy is the addition of hundreds of centered subheads, which were only marginal titles added to the 12th Brazilian edition (1933), being the effusions of the editor, one Nery. Inserted as subheads, the marginalia do further damage to the structure of the text, constituting a distortion of the author's arrangement, a constantly irritating series of stops that seem designed merely to excite the fading, failing attention of easily jaded readers. Long sentences, long paragraphs, and long chapters are characteristic of Cunha; and so the razzle-dazzle of the title change and the typographical break-up technique borrowed from *The Reader's Digest* are reprehensible, and indicate disrespect for the magnitude of Cunha's achievement.

As a measure of that magnitude, let it be said flatly that *Os Sertões* is one of the half-dozen best books of this century, and that an acquaintance of ten years has not diminished this estimate.

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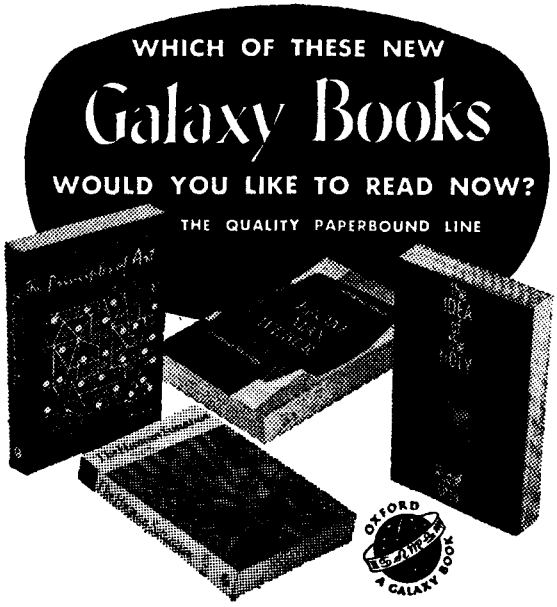

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